

THE NEW RUSSIA.

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BY

LIONEL DECLE

AUTHOR OF

"THREE YEARS IN SAVAGE AFRICA"

"TROOPER 3809," &c.

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PREFACE

SINCE this book was written great changes have taken place in Russia, and most of my predictions have been realized.

As I anticipated, Count Witte has resigned. The coalition of his enemies and the antagonism of those who should have been his friends have made it impossible for him to carry farther the burden which he shouldered when he assumed the Premiership.

He has been succeeded by a professed antagonist of popular freedom who has selected colleagues still less liberal than himself; with what seems the most extraordinary lack of foresight, he has entrusted the solution of the agrarian question to a Minister who, if he is consistent with the policy which he has always advocated, is bound to precipitate the agrarian crisis.

The opening of the Duma has also justified my predictions. Imperative demands, almost impossible of fulfilment, have been addressed to the

Emperor the very first day of the meeting of the National Assembly.

The tone adopted by the representatives of the people and the threats of appeal to violence show the spirit which animates them. The advocates of Absolutism who sit in the Duma allowed themselves to be cowed by their opponents; not one of them had the pluck to rise in protest against the open threats of the majority, and their cowardice went so far that they even voted with men whom they have hitherto denounced as villains of the deepest dye. It will be seen that I have insisted upon the characteristic manner in which Russians are cowed by any superior exhibition of strength, and it has never been more conspicuous than in the first meeting of the Duma.

Count Witte is the only man strong enough to deal with this rebellious Assembly—he was not there.

The history of the past year gives us the right to fear that his weak successor may first advise his Imperial master to comply with the arrogant and ever increasing demands of the Duma until its members have become so threatening that it will be necessary to dissolve the Assembly.

Then the weak Cabinet, unable to cope with

disorders, riots and “Jacquerie,” will have to be replaced by a strong man, and I should not wonder if Trepoff then became military Dictator.

What will happen in that event, nobody can foretell. Rivers of blood may flow all over Russia, but to what purpose, with what result, can neither be said nor even surmised.

One thing only seems certain : civil war may rage in the Muscovite Empire, but there will be no Revolution in the immediate future.

There will be no Revolution because the Tsar, or rather Tsardom, for the Russian people as a whole represents more than a Principle—it is part of their Religion.



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Donated by
SRI S. C. S. RAO, M.A.,
Maharajahm of Coosimbazar
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INTRODUCTION

BEFORE THE CURTAIN RISES

RUSSIA is just at present on the eve of the most momentous period of its history.

Within the last year we have already witnessed the prologue of the great drama which is about to be played. To those who are not intimately acquainted with Russia and her people, this prologue must have appeared incoherent and almost impossible to understand, for the best of reasons, that the actors did not know themselves the meaning of the parts which they were acting. It was a case of irresponsible followers rushing behind incoherent leaders.

The truth is that the Russians had suddenly awakened out of the most ghastly nightmare, and, still dazed and only half awake, the nightmare still vivid in their minds, they had but one thought—to rush madly headlong, in order to escape from its horrors. They rushed about, anywhere, anyhow, not caring where they went so long as they ran. In the same way does a patient, suffering from cardiac distress, rush about the room to try and escape from the agony which he endures.

It was then that the Tsar, urged by Count Witte and Prince Obolenski, granted to his people liberties

and a constitution for which they were wholly unprepared and which they were unfit to enjoy. The result was, that the Russian people, trained from their earliest youth to maintain a silence upon which the peaceful enjoyment of their life and their personal freedom depended, were quite bewildered when they discovered that individual liberty, freedom of speech, liberty of the Press, and the right to govern themselves, had been suddenly granted to them. What did they know of all this? What did all those, high-sounding words represent to their uneducated minds? Liberty, of course, meant for each man the right to do as he liked, freedom of the Press signified that the Press was debarred from all check, and the right to govern themselves implied the passing of laws for the sole benefit of the special section of the community to which every individual man belonged. That the interests of the landlords could be reconciled with those of the peasant, the rights of the employer with those of the workman, never occurred to them. Can we blame them? They took the Tsar's words according to their literal meaning. He had spoken of rights; he would certainly have mentioned duties if he had meant to impose them on his people. So they reasoned.

The Tsar's manifesto was taken in its literal sense, and, to understand how it is possible that men should reason in, what seems to us, so absurd a fashion, it must be borne in mind that the Russians were never taught to *think*, they were never allowed

to discuss the right or wrong of the methods by which they were governed, they never had a chance of finding out the reasons for which laws were passed or regulations issued. A law appeared in the *Gazette*, and it had to be obeyed, and there was an end of it. A very great mistake was therefore committed: when the Tsar's Manifesto was issued Count Witte ought to have explained to the people what was really meant by the Emperor's promises. This could have been done in an unofficial but effective manner by drawing up in writing a memorandum explaining the meaning of the various points contained in the manifesto. This written document could have been communicated to all the organs of the Press, through which it would have come to the knowledge of all the people. Instead of this, the Premier thought it sufficient to give verbal explanations to a limited number of journalists, with the deplorable result which I have stated.

It will be seen farther on to what other causes the revolutionary outburst of last year must be attributed, and I think that Count Witte's explanation, which I shall give later on,* is the true and correct one.

The crushing defeat sustained by the revolutionaries at Moscow broke the back of the Revolution, and, except for partial and local movements, Russia may be said to enjoy a relative calm at present.

It is, however, only a lull in the storm, and very

* See p. 217.

soon great events, tending to shape the future of Russia, will take place. I do not think that there will be a revolution, because the Army will cling to its allegiance to the Crown and do the bidding of the Government. When, however, the Duma (National Assembly) meets,* as it will in a short time, it will be under its roof that the great struggle will begin. If we consider that there exist, actually in Russia, twenty-seven different political parties, each of them having a different programme, different aims, and proposing different methods to deal with the reforms which are to be carried out, it is impossible to predict or surmise what will take place.

So far as the people are concerned, I think that a great rising of the working classes is not likely to occur again. The dark spot in the horizon lies on the side of the peasants. They want land, and are determined to have it, and, unless some means is found of giving them satisfaction, they may rise *en masse*. Considering that they number 102 millions of individuals, one shudders to think of the possible consequences.

Now it has struck me that when the Duma is going to meet, all the great questions which will be discussed will be unintelligible to the majority of the British public, who are in absolute ignorance of the main features, which are peculiar to Russian national life. There exists at present no popular book giving in a concise and clear form a general

* * This book was written before the meeting of the Duma.

aperçu of the present system under which the administration, the law, education, taxation are organised in Russia.

I have therefore endeavoured to meet this urgent need. In this little work I have not only tried to deal with the matters which I have just mentioned, but I have also called attention to the main questions which have led to so many abuses, and which make immediate reform imperative. I have considered it best to give a few illustrations of the methods adopted by the representatives of the two extreme parties, but I have been careful to limit such descriptions to incidents which have come to my knowledge through the testimony of men whose veracity is beyond doubt. But, even so, it should be understood that I have only heard one side of the stories, and that the only portion of them which I can guarantee to be accurate is that which refers to fact.

I have also reproduced conversations held with Ministers and high officials, but have abstained from comments upon them, because I prefer to let the reader draw his own conclusions.

It only remains for me to thank all those Russians who have shown me unbounded kindness, hospitality, and confidence, and I hope that they will acknowledge that I have done my best to describe the true state of Russia with absolute impartiality. Whether I have succeeded in doing so remains for the reader to decide.

Events have been moving in Russia with such

kaleidoscopic swiftness that it has seemed best to bring out this book as soon as possible after my return from Russia. I have had, consequently only a few weeks to write it, and I wish to thank my friends, C. K. Burrow and J. A. T. Lloyd, for the great help which they have given me in preparing this hastily-written book and seeing it through the Press.

CHAPTER I

THE SLAV TEMPERAMENT

RUSSIA, exploited endlessly by novelists and constantly explained by journalists, is still a land of mystery utterly irreducible to any formula. Mystery and contrast is the keynote of everything Russian : the country, the people, their politics and their laws. Here we find ice-bound regions, there sun-parched deserts ; portions of the vast Muscovite Empire consist of arid steppes, others are most fertile and stand among the most noted grain-producing regions of the world.

The Russian community is equally full of contrast. On one side we find wealth and luxury, great noblemen, wealthy landlords, merchants and manufacturers ; on the other, poverty and want, artisans, labourers and peasants struggling hard to keep body and soul together. The first live only to enjoy life to its fullest extent ; the second struggle hard to keep death from their door.

Contrast is also the chief characteristic of individuals in Russia : possessed of inexhaustible patience, indifferent to their surroundings, humble and servile,

the people will suddenly become fierce revolutionaries, ready to commit every excess with as little regard for their own lives as for the lives of those who oppose them. Then equally suddenly they will revert into their previous condition of indifferent apathy.

But yesterday these revolutionary Slavs were fighting desperately against overwhelming odds, only to fall back, cowed by the first defeat. That was in Moscow—and so it had been in Sebastopol, in Odessa, in Riga. St. Petersburg has a somewhat similar story. There, for almost a week, the Russian Government stood helpless in the face of the terrible resistance of inertia by which the revolutionaries, without firing a shot, without violence, checkmated the power of the Tsar far more successfully than any armed rising could have done. The result of the general strike to which I am alluding was the complete stoppage of all communications by rail and telegraph, and the consequent absolute paralysis of the whole machinery of government. But, as in Moscow, the triumph of the revolutionaries was followed by a pitiful collapse.

To revert to Moscow: The fiery Slavs held at bay for more than a week troops armed with modern weapons, defying even artillery and machine guns. All these manifestations gave one the impression that a new and irresistible power had risen in Russia and would soon hold the country at its mercy. Yet the collapse of the revolutionaries was

as sudden and as complete as their effort had been audacious.

They had not found a man, the traditional leader, infinitely more necessary to the blind and anonymous mass by the Neva than to the talkative *boulevardier* by the Seine.

They had not found a man. One man had found them, it is true, placing himself at their head, but he was not the true leader whom the people follow. It is a remarkable fact that, great as the part which has been played by this man, Croustaliouff, of whom more hereafter, his name is hardly known outside Russia.

As a matter of fact, little or nothing is known in this country of the true condition of Russia ; to realise what it is, you must understand the people, and it is very hard to do so when you have to deal with men who do nothing like anybody else.

I left England to visit Russia in January last : December had been the most eventful month of the most eventful year in Russia's modern history. It began with the mutiny of the Black Sea fleet ; then followed the general strike in St. Petersburg ; north, south, east, and west strikes, insurrections, rebellions, and civil war raged continuously ; rebellion of the sailors at Reval, armed insurrection in the Baltic Provinces, at Nijni-Novgorod, Tiver, Voronezh, Riga, Kharkoff, to quote but a few names ; civil war in the Caucasus : the whole culminating in the terrible Moscow insurrection which came to an end on December 29.

Need it be wondered if I was under the delusion shared by all my friends that I was going to drop into the midst of a revolution? When I reached St. Petersburg early one morning of January last I was quite astonished to find the city in its normal state. The shops were opening, the streets full of people, men and women going to their business were chatting gaily and did not look in the least like people whose minds were burdened with tragic thoughts.

There is a strange fascination in the capital of Russia clad in its winter garments; you can see the streets teeming with traffic, sledges gliding behind fast-trotting horses, the pavement full of people hurrying about, yet silence prevails all round you, and in vain you strain your ears to catch some of the sounds which to your mind are inseparable from busy traffic. The hum of human voices, the cries of street hawkers, the shouts of newspaper boys, the clatter of the hoofs of horses on the roadway, the rumble of carriage-wheels, the creaking of the brakes of heavy vehicles. Snow-clad Russia knows none of this music. There is movement, but no noise; and to add to the contrast with what we are accustomed to in this country, instead of conveyances towering over pedestrians, in Russia pedestrians tower over the vehicles. Russian sledges are ridiculous little concerns in which you sit, hardly three feet above the level of the street, in a narrow little box, so narrow that when two people sit in a sledge each has one half of his anatomy suspended

over the street. It is certainly a most pleasant arrangement to drive about in with a pretty girl, because you are bound to hold her round the waist to save her from falling out. In front of the sledge emerges out of a narrow slit the huge body of a driver, colossal in his garments padded with cushions, who, as he has no room for his legs, is often compelled to place his feet in stirrups outside the sledge. He nearly touches his horse, which towers over him, and to see in front of the animal he must constantly lean to one side or the other. These drivers seem to form part of their sledge, and they resemble it in their silence. In the streets are no groups of people crowding round some hawker or standing before a shop window, and even when a score of sledges are collected together outside some restaurant or theatre the drivers seem to stick to their machines without inclination to talk with their companions; their patience seems as inexhaustible as is their endurance: a Russian thinks nothing of keeping his sledge waiting in the street from 8 P.M. until 5 A.M. Neither snow, wind or frost ever seem to make a difference to the coachman, who receives his master with a smile and without ever showing a sign of impatience.

It seemed incredible that these should be the bloodthirsty revolutionaries of whom I had heard so much. I then visited a portion of St. Petersburg where most of the factories are to be found; I saw thousands of workmen going out to their dinner.

and in vain I looked for a sign of excitement among them ; all showed utter unconcern, they were quiet but none of them was even sullen. I felt tempted at first to ask myself whether all that I had read about the revolution was not mere romance.

As a matter of fact there has been no *revolution* in Russia. Revolution means a fundamental *change*, and when it applies to politics it signifies a change of *régime* brought about by forcible means. Now in Russia there has been no change of *régime* ; not only has there been no attempt made to dispense with the rule of the Tsar, but, what is more striking still, the name of the Tsar has been constantly used by the agitators to urge the people to rise. When the sailors mutinied at Sebastopol they only did so after they had been assured that the rising was in no way incompatible with their loyalty to the Emperor ; we shall see how in certain cases when a Republic was proclaimed in some towns the people, after singing the "Marscillaise," intoned the hymn to the Tsar.

No less striking is the fact that the men who placed themselves at the head of the mob, when they found the people ready to rise, merely organized their resistance. They strove to paralyse the action of Government without attempting to play a leading part themselves.

I mean that instead of the leader who carries away the people behind him, whom the people follow, because he has gathered them, Croustaliouff

found the people ready gathered, eager to go ahead, but not knowing where or how. He placed himself at their head, directed them in a fixed path, but did not lead them. When he was arrested he was not missed; no demonstration to claim his release took place; he disappeared and the movement collapsed; his directing power was missed, but not the man. The fact of his having remained in the background is shown by his name not being known in this country. He found the machine already manufactured. He put the last pieces together, and set it in motion, but it worked unproductively. When he ceased to be there to direct the engine it stopped and remained a mass of useless metal. Croustaliouff fitted together the component parts of a great force, but was incapable of directing it to a practical issue.

Another most striking characteristic of the Russian mind is the spirit of imitation and the lack of individual initiative. In most cases risings only took place in various towns and provinces in consequence of the rumours which were circulated that risings had taken place elsewhere. To circulate these rumours became easy in consequence of the post and telegraph strike, which made it impossible to verify the accuracy of the news which was published; for instance, in many cases risings occurred simultaneously in two different towns, the people in each one of them being under the impression that a rising had already taken place in the other town,

each breaking into insurrection, under the impression that the other had done so before.

All this would read like a farce if it did not spell so grim a tragedy. It shows, however, one thing, that the Russian lacks above all initiative, but is prepared for anything if some one sets him the example.

Such is the Slav temperament, which apparently nothing can alter.

Russia, no less than the Revolutionary Party, seemed to be in want of a man. Now, in her sore need, she has found him ; his name is Count Witte.

Whether she will know how to retain the services of such a man is, however, doubtful.

Every one seems to conspire to make his task an impossible one. Reactionaries and revolutionaries fear him for similar reasons. Both know that unless they drive him from power he will carry out the reforms promised by the Manifesto. This would deprive the reactionaries of the privileges to which they cling, and the revolutionaries would cease to have a pretext for creating disturbances, which is their sole object.

Personally, I do not see how Count Witte will resist the coalition of his enemies, whose powerful influence has gone so far as to force one of their tools into his Cabinet, and I am convinced that he will resign if their opposition makes it impossible for him to carry out his almost superhuman task, only undertaken through patriotism and devotion to the Russian people as a whole.

CHAPTER II

TOWN AND COUNTRY

WHAT I have said of the apparent unconcern of the people, of their stolid indifference at a time when hardly one of them can be found who has not lost a relative or friend within the last twelve months, gives an illustration of the manner in which the Russian accepts life. Half measures are unknown to him ; it takes long to arouse him, but once aroused he wastes no time in words but proceeds at once to act, and then he does so with heart and soul, and nothing stops him.

When we think of what took place in Moscow, where the revolutionaries fought night and day until they had to give up the struggle through sheer exhaustion ; when we remember with what implacable determination they carried out their purposes without sparing the lives of those against whom they had risen any more than they spared their own lives, we are led to ask ourselves whether such men are heroes or brutes ? •

I should like to call them heroes, but heroes are generous as well as brave.

Among all the scenes of carnage which have been enacted within the last year all over Russia there seems, unfortunately, to have been no single instance when a man on either side has shown the least mercy towards fallen foes, thus winning his enemies to his cause by one of those acts of magnanimity which belong only to the truly brave.

Civil war is bound to cause the perpetration of many cruel deeds, usually under the excitement of the moment and as the result of irresistible impulse. No such excuse can, however, be pleaded in favour of those insurgents who broke into the house of the chief of the Moscow police and coolly informed him that he must prepare to die, adding that he would be allowed a few minutes grace to bid good-bye to his wife and children. In vain he appealed for mercy; his intended murderers were inexorable. They warned him that if he delayed he would be hurried off to his death without having taken leave of his family. When the parting scene took place the executioners witnessed unmoved the heartrending cries of his children, the agony of his wife, and then dragged their victim to his death. They never gave a thought to the fact that the bullets which struck the doomed man outside his own house must have inflicted still deeper wounds on the loving hearts of those who were left behind, when they heard the sound of the shots which were depriving them of a husband and a father. He was past all suffering, but the widow and orphans remained to bear the agony

of the tragedy which had fallen upon their innocent lives.

Had the mob broken into the man's house and riddled him with bullets in the presence of his family the incident would have been merely a sad one. But to find words to qualify the men who have been guilty of the loathsome deed which I have just described is impossible ; to call them savages would be an insult to many far better men than themselves ; they are cowards and unmanly brutes. Yet those men have within a few hours' time resumed the placid and humdrum mode of life which they had always led, like bulls quietly grazing after madly charging some one carrying a piece of red cloth. Any one of those very men may probably to-day be driving a sledge, and will most respectfully greet any officer of police who may hire his conveyance, and who can with absolute security trust himself in his driver's hands through the most lonely portions of the town ; none of these desperate characters will think to-day of what has occurred yesterday, any more than he gives a thought to the incidents of a day's orgy in the past.

Are such people to be entrusted with a liberty which seems of so little concern to them ? The true fact of the case is that the Russian nation is not ripe for the liberty which has been granted to them by the Tsar's Manifesto ; the people themselves care little for a Constitution, they do not even know what it means ; yet a revolution can only be avoided by the introduction of a real and tangible Constitutional

Government on the lines promised by the Tsar's Manifesto. The events of last year have shown that the mob can be led to the most desperate extremes if agitators rouse up the latent spirit of discontent which prevails in Russia and of which the people themselves are unconscious. They are unable to understand what ails them; they do not even realize that they are ill at ease; but let any one point out to them that they are uncomfortable, and promise them relief through violence, they will become formidable tools ready to strike and destroy for the sake of destruction.

The problem, then, which faces the Russian Government at present is one of almost insuperable difficulty. To deal with a great popular movement, to grant the demands formulated by the people, and to surrender before a great wave of popular opinion is easy enough, but when you have to deal with twenty-seven different political parties each one headed by men who have no definite programme, who each have conflicting views about what they want, or rather who do not know themselves what they want, and who are not even agreed upon what they do not want, is, to say the least, bewildering. It is the more so when you realize that each one of those who represent this multitude of parties has the power to arouse an unconscious mob, ready to kill, destroy, and plunder whoever and whatever comes in its way, and without knowing themselves why they do so.

In other countries a great popular rising stops automatically as soon as the people have secured the object which they have been unable to attain by other means. The upheaval of last year in Russia cannot be described as a popular rising. The mob has simply run amuck, and the worst of this form of disease is that you never know when the fit will come again.

I think, however, that I can safely predict that disturbances will not start in the future from the towns, although these may be involved in them ; and I will 'show later on that the danger' which now threatens Russia comes from the peasants, and that, if they rise, the cities, far from joining them, will probably oppose them, and that civil war may arise in consequence. I merely mention this contingency as a possibility, but it is one which cannot be ignored.

CHAPTER III

THE LEADERS—CROUSTALIOFF

LET us now consider the various circumstances which have combined to bring about the most recent revolutionary outbreaks. The war with Japan became most unpopular in Russia, not so much on account of the reverses which befell the Russian arms, as in consequence of the cruel hardships and of the amount of suffering which it brought among the poorer classes. The reserves were called out in order to take the place of the troops which had been sent to the front, and the reservists left their wives and children in a state of absolute destitution. The women belonging to great towns or living in thickly populated rural districts received a little help from private charity and from more fortunate neighbours ; but many of them—wives, mothers or sisters of soldiers—who were living in distant small villages, with only a few inhabitants, not only failed to obtain help from neighbours as poor as themselves, but were unable to secure the assistance of men to cultivate the little field upon which they were entirely dependent for

subsistence. In many a case every able-bodied man had been called under the colours, and their family was left to starve. In an army where the soldier receives less than one penny per day, it is impossible for him to contribute to the support of the family which he has left behind him. Therefore, bitter dissatisfaction was the chief consequence which the war produced throughout Russia. As to the war itself little or nothing was known about it. The Press was not allowed to publish any news except such as was officially communicated by Government, but this lack of news was not felt as a hardship even among the more educated classes. Manchuria was a region which had never been considered as an integral portion of Russia, and whether it was retained or not was a matter of total indifference to nearly every one. It will, therefore, be understood why Kuropatkin's messages, with their invariable formula about the army having "retired according to a pre-arranged plan," did not strike people in Russia in the light in which we viewed them. Not a single person among the best educated classes in Russia took a tithe of the interest which the most indifferent of our working men displayed in the various incidents of the war. It resulted, however, in arousing the spirit of dissatisfaction which had long been smouldering among the mass of the people, and it led them into a state of mind similar to the one which causes the schoolboy to run about and shout for no other cause than a craving for exuber-

ance after a couple of hours of enforced silence in the schoolroom under the master's eye. The school-boy, however, only makes up for a couple of hours of enforced restraint, while the Russian people had to make up for a lifetime of oppression. They seized the first opportunity which offered itself when the restriction which had previously surrounded the expression of public opinion had been removed, and they certainly took full advantage of the new liberty granted to them. Most governments would have felt inclined to deprive such people for ever of a liberty of which they had shown themselves so unworthy.

What occurred then enables me to show that Count Witte on the contrary has proved himself fully consistent with his principles. It will be seen further on that, in reviewing the past history of Russia, he strongly condemned the Tsar Alexander II for having allowed the activity of the Nihilists to stop him from following the road he had mapped out, so that he suddenly turned from the great liberal policy which he had inaugurated into the narrowest path of reaction. "A strong Government," observed the Premier, "must not allow its policy to be affected by the activity of a section of the community, and it is not because riots break out, because conspiracies are organised against the life of a ruler, that he is justified in abandoning the policy which he has inaugurated to adopt one in direct opposition to it. It is as if he abandoned a great palace which he has begun to erect to retire within the walls of a barren

fortified stronghold." Certainly Count Witte did not allow himself to be influenced by the revolutionary outbreaks which preceded the issue of the Tsar's Manifesto, and whatever his enemies may say I feel sure that he means to carry out every promise which it contains or to resign if he finds it impossible to do so.

The Russian people were, as I have shown, ready for some outburst, and it only needed some one who would take advantage of their disposition to bring matters to a climax.

The man was handy.

Although I have remarked that the Russian Revolutionary Party is and has been without a leader, I must admit that the statement is not absolutely correct. There is one man who, if he has not organized the great demonstrations by which the Russian people have asserted their determination to secure reforms, has at least been the life and soul of the Association of Workmen. That association has enabled them to find themselves prepared for common action with the object of asserting the hitherto unsuspected power of the labouring classes in Russia.

This man is generally known under the name of Croustalioff, although his real name is Nassar : how and why he assumed the former name will be seen presently. The son of a peasant, he was born near Tsheringoff in " Little Russia." After going through the village primary school he entered the Gymnasium at Kharkoff, becoming afterwards a student at the

Moscow University. When I deal with the education question it will be seen how a peasant's son could have found it possible to face the cost of a university education. The young man distinguished himself before and after entering the university, and he was not yet twenty-two when he secured his degree. He had taken law as the subject of his university course, and having secured his degree he entered the office of M. Cherimetuffski, the leader of the Moscow Bar. When the first revolutionary symptoms manifested themselves three years ago young Nassar felt that there was a part for him to play ; he understood that to gain influence over the working classes it was necessary to possess an intimate knowledge of their life and their wants, which could only be acquired by becoming closely associated with them. And so he left the lawyer's office to learn a trade. The compositors were the most intelligent among the artizans, and they were taking a most active part in politics. He therefore decided to join this trade and became apprenticed ; so rapid was his progress that he soon secured a post as compositor in the printing department of the Holy Synod. The ties which united the members of the printing trade were so close that he found it easy to bind them still closer together by forming an association of the St. Petersburg compositors. Having carried out this plan he was elected president of the association. The results which followed convinced him of the power which co-operation gives

to the artizan, and he decided to extend the movement to other towns. Successively he visited Moscow, Kieff, Odessa and Kharkoff, where the local compositors were formed into associations all affiliated together under his supreme control.

Just when he had completed his task in the chief towns of the Empire the revolutionary movement began to assume a more acute phase; the associated compositors displayed an activity which attracted the attention of the police and led to the arrest of several of their number. This only fanned into a flame the embers which were smouldering. Under the name of Croustalioff, the compositor, young Nassar, who had also represented himself as a peasant in order to disguise his identity, began to be almost a celebrity among the working men. His activity knew no bounds, and day after day he organised meetings of his associates. So as to avoid police interference these meetings were held in the country at the house of a lady who sympathised with the young lawyer. Under the pretext of attending social gatherings the budding revolutionaries used to come to the lady's house at Ligowa, eight miles from St. Petersburg.

Meanwhile, the example of the compositors had been followed by artizans belonging to many other trades, and they, too, had grouped themselves into associations. As soon as the Revolution broke out openly Croustalioff formed the "Association of Associations," a combination of all the various

associated bodies of artizans, and he became president of the combined groups, which position enabled him to command unparalleled influence over the working classes.

After the disturbances which followed the issue of the Imperial Manifesto, the Government hoped to win over the revolutionaries by the adoption of a liberal policy. Notwithstanding the abuse which had been made of it, the right of meeting was not withdrawn from the people, and Croustaliouff took full advantage of it. Meetings were organized by him almost every day; never tired, he invariably spoke at each one of these gatherings, and his undoubted eloquence, the earnest conviction which prompted every one of his words, never failed to impress deeply those whose political education he had determined to carry out. The abuse which continued to be made of the liberty of meeting which the people had enjoyed so far compelled the Government to put an end to all popular gatherings. Croustaliouff, however, managed to evade the vigilance of the police, and the authorities realised that no peace of mind would be ensured among the people and that calm would never be restored so long as the workmen's committee of two hundred members, with Croustaliouff as their president, remained at large and continued to arouse the political passion of the people. The difficulty, however, was to find some means of charging him with an offence against the law, and unfortunately for the police no sufficient

grounds could be found to justify the arrest of Croustalioff and his followers.

Determined to try diplomacy, since he was unable to use force, General Dedouline, then Prefect of Police at St. Petersburg, in which position he was the successor of General Trepoff, sent for Croustalioff, who came to his office.

"Well, M. Croustalioff," said the General to him, "when are you going to keep yourself quiet and cease to give us trouble?"

"Your Excellency," replied Croustalioff, "I confess that I do not quite understand your remarks. I have never broken the law" . . .

"No," interrupted the General, "you have never broken it, if by that you mean that you have never actually broken it, but you have so wilfully twisted it that it is hardly possible to recognize its original shape. Now let me warn you that we have made up our minds not to allow this to go on any longer, and that on the very first occasion that you take another liberty with the law I shall immediately have you arrested."

"That you are welcome to," replied Croustalioff, "only I doubt whether you will ever get a chance."

"I will soon disabuse you," replied the General; "you see, I know all your affairs, although you may not suspect it."

"Do you?" replied the revolutionary leader.

"Oh," said the General, "although you are

a clever man, you value too highly the education which you have picked up by contact with the men among whom you find yourself since you came to live in town."

Croustalioff thereupon lost his head and allowed himself to be carried away by the pleasure of scoring over one of the most powerful men in Russia.

"I see," he answered, with a sneer, "your Excellency takes me for a peasant. You know well my affairs, your Excellency, you know them well, indeed! Well, let me tell you that Croustalioff the peasant, Croustalioff the compositor, Croustalioff the President of the Workmen's Association, is not Croustalioff at all, but M. Nassar, the lawyer and the junior to M. Cherimetuffski, the leader of the Moscow Bar. So now you know my affairs, your Excellency!"

General Dedouline did not answer at once; but he looked at the great leader with a smile of pity and somewhat of contempt.

"M. Nassar," he then remarked, "I thank you. You have now given me the opportunity which I was seeking to arrest you, and it is most kind and considerate of you to have come to my office so as to enable me to arrest you without troubling myself even with searching for you. You have admitted that you are masquerading under a false name, with a false passport, which are distinct offences under the common law; and now Russia will be quiet once

more, and you will enjoy a well-deserved rest at His Majesty's expense."

So Croustalioff was arrested, and the other members of the workmen's committee were soon sent to join him in jail.

CHAPTER IV

CHAOTIC IGNORANCE

I HAVE endeavoured to show in the previous chapter how a combination of circumstances led to the climax from which has resulted the first revolutionary outburst. It is now necessary to examine the aim and object which the revolutionaries have had, or at least ought to have had, in organizing the manifestations which struck every one by their magnitude, and which seemed to denote a spirit of discipline and a unity of purpose seldom found in similar movements.

I have discussed the future of Russia with a number of men belonging to the most educated portion of the people, and not only have heard their personal views, but I have also listened to their comments upon the utterances of their leaders and opponents. When I say "leaders," I merely use the word as a figure of speech, because, although I have mentioned the part which has been played by Croustaliouff, he cannot be looked upon as a great leader, but rather as a man who has known how to place himself at the head of a crowd which was

ready to be set in motion. It is a remarkable fact, on the other hand, that every liberal or revolutionist in Russia holds views of his own, and recognizes no supreme leader. There are, as I have already said, altogether twenty-seven different political parties in Russia, and among these parties themselves unity is far from existing. The outcome of every conversation which I have had on the subject of politics has been to convince me of the fact that the Russians have no more conception of the methods according to which a nation can be governed than the most ignorant savage in the heart of Africa. If one comes to consider how such a thing is possible, an explanation can be found by remembering what obtains in England and other European countries, where constitutional governments and liberal institutions have long existed. The manner in which government is carried out, in which laws are applied by the courts, and the principles on which the institutions of each country are based, come unconsciously to the knowledge of the people through what they read daily in the newspapers. Although a man may never attend the law courts, although he may never witness the proceedings of our parliamentary, municipal, or other governing bodies, yet by reading day after day the reports which appear in the papers, he cannot help learning what takes place there. The Russians have never had a chance of learning anything of the kind, first of all, because their newspapers could not have

described what did not exist ; secondly, because the Russian Administration always stood as a kind of awe-inspiring body whose proceedings were shrouded in inscrutable mystery. No sacrilegious pen would have dared to allude to the manner in which the alchemy of the Government was manipulated, and in the law courts the elixir of law was dispensed to the public, bottled up and sealed after being manufactured according to a secret formula, like a patent medicine. Even reports of what took place in the law courts were never published in the papers, and only the results of lawsuits occasionally appeared in the Press. Evidently the censor was not alone responsible for this state of affairs, as though the press now enjoys a comparative liberty and papers are free to publish whatever they like, being only punished in case objection is found to what has appeared in their columns, yet the same silence is still maintained with regard to lawsuits. For instance, the trial of Lieutenant Schrödter, who was commanding the mutinous battleships at Odessa, was left unreported, and only the verdict appeared in the Russian papers, although the case was one which created considerable interest.

No books dealing with such sacred subjects as those I have mentioned above were ever allowed to cross the Russian frontier, and even those superior and inquisitive philosophers who managed to smuggle works on the tabooed questions only took interest in the philosophical side of matters in which

they never had, and never seemed likely to have, the chance of taking a practical part. In England, in France or Germany, the people who study foreign institutions and politics form their opinion upon them chiefly by comparison with what obtains in their own country. There again, the Russians have never had a chance, because the little which they managed to hear, of foreign politics was presented to them in a form which made it impossible for any one to realise its bearing. The censor unmercifully struck out anything likely to set public opinion making comparisons with conditions in Russia. It will therefore be understood how it is that the Russians lack every practical conception of what a government really means; the childish simplicity with which men of superior intellect suggest a solution to the most complex questions is absolutely startling at first, and can only, I think, be ascribed to the reasons which I have just given. Under the circumstances it will be understood how hopeless a task lies before those Ministers who have assumed the responsibility of carrying out the provisions of the Tsar's Manifesto. It will be understood how difficult it is for them to deal with people who lay every day fresh grievances before them and suggest most unpractical remedies, expressing astonishment and discontent when immediate satisfaction is not given to them. The Russian reformers are for ever losing sight of the fact that a government does not consist of a conglomeration of individual depart-

ments, each possessing a separate and independent existence. For instance, Count Witte is taken to task for not having removed immediately some governor who has been found unfit to exercise his duties, and people cannot understand why such a man is allowed to remain in office until a successor, who has been appointed, has taken his place. They do not grasp the fact that the new governor will have to take over the administration from the hands of his predecessor, and that he cannot and would not be saddled with the responsibility of entering upon his important functions without having been made aware of the condition of the various services depending on his administration, because, if he did so without having formally taken over the succession of the outgoing governor, any misdeed, misappropriation of funds, or other irregularities committed before his arrival, could be set down to him and the responsibility for them might consequently fall upon him.

In the same way reformers cannot understand why Count Witte has not immediately, upon assuming office, made a clean sweep of the whole of the existing administration. It is impossible to convince such people that officials cannot be improvised, and that bad as an administration may be, it can only be slowly and gradually improved. As an illustration of the childish simplicity of the Russians in general, I shall mention what occurred a short time ago, when a deputation of peasants from the Caucasus came to lay their grievances before Count Witte.

After pointing out the state of destitution which prevails in the Caucasus the delegates declared : " That the first thing to be done in order to restore calm was to grant land to the peasants." Upon being asked by Count Witte where he was to find land for the purpose, they pointed out that he might divide the Crown lands among them. Count Witte replied that if he divided the whole of the Crown lands between all the Russian peasants this would give to each one of them barely enough land to stand upon. Thereupon the delegates suggested that the landlords should be compelled to hand over their estates to the people, compensation being paid to them by the State ; at the same time they insisted upon the necessity of reducing taxation, which had become far too heavy. How they expected the Government to pay compensation to the landlords without raising the taxation does not appear, and what shows better still their absolute lack of common sense is that they were even asking for a reduction in the taxes. Count Witte's refusal to consider their suggestions caused intense discontent among them, and they left him, convinced that he was determined to oppose the execution of the promises made by the Tsar's Manifesto.

The agrarian question illustrates most strikingly the ignorance which prevails in Russia with regard to all questions of government. When the serfs were emancipated they were all granted a certain amount of land, for which they had to pay in small

instalments, extending over forty-five years. They first paid without grumbling, but when a new generation came these payments ceased to be looked upon as payments for the land, and they appeared to the peasant in the light of taxes, the peasants complaining bitterly that they had to pay taxes on their land while the great landlords paid nothing. The peasants forgot that the landlords owned their estates, which had either come to them through inheritance or by purchase, while the people had to pay yearly instalments for the purchase of their fields. On the other hand, there is no doubt that the seven acres which were granted to the serfs on their emancipation, were then sufficient to supply their wants, but have become insufficient for the wants of the people under present conditions. The families have grown, and the manner in which the land has been used has so impoverished it that at least double the original amount is indispensable to feed the present population. One of the arguments used by the peasants in asking for the landlords' estates is that the Tsar has every advantage in taking the land from the landlords, because they pay nothing on it, while if it is handed over to the peasants they will be made to pay something.

There is no doubt that the agrarian question is the most vital among all the reforms which would have to be introduced. At the same time, it seems impossible to give satisfaction to the demands of the peasants, and it is certain that this will lead to

serious trouble, and that a rising of the peasants may occur this spring, in which case this will lead to far more serious results than any which have been witnessed up to the present. The Russian peasants number 102 millions, and it is appalling to consider what may occur if they rise *en masse*. Although I have already said so before, I have been led to repeat it because I think that it is one of the points of the present situation upon which one cannot insist too much. •

Moreover, if, as there is every reason to fear, Count Witte should be driven out of the Premiership, there will not be one single other man in Russia capable of coping with this question, which involves problems of finance which none but a financial genius like the Premier is capable of solving.

CHAPTER V

CONDITION OF THE PEOPLE •

I HAVE already insisted upon the fact that there is no revolution in Russia, and that a revolution in the proper sense of the word, that is to say, a change of *régime*, is quite out of the question ; in fact, among all the anomalies which the study of what has taken place in Russia reveals to us, the most remarkable is the manner in which the Tsar's name has been used to excite the people to rise against the authority of the Government, to loot, destroy, and massacre whatever came in their way in the country districts of Russia. The Russian peasant has no political ideal ; he doesn't know what a Republic means, the word Constitution has no significance for him. Liberty does not even appeal to him, and all he cares for is to have sufficient land to feed himself and his family, with a surplus from the sale of whatever produce he does not require for his personal wants. The proceeds of what he sells enable him to get royally drunk, a pleasure which he enjoys as often as he can manage it. For him drunkenness has no degree ; his idea of enjoyment being to drink

until he gets unconscious and dead to the world. Apart from that, he is aware of two great powers in this world—one is God in heaven, the other the Tsar on earth. To him the Tsar stands as the personification of everything that is good, noble, kind-hearted, generous, and just; whatever injustice he has to suffer from, he never holds the Tsar responsible for it; he blames the noblemen, the wealthy landowners, "who stand between him and the Tsar, and prevent their 'Little Father' from giving them proof of his love and his kindness." Fully aware of this spirit, common to all the peasants, agitators always approach them in the name of the Tsar; some of them have even gone to the rural districts attired in the uniform of one of the Emperor's aides-de-camp. They told the people that they were sent to them by his Majesty, who was kept a prisoner by the noblemen, and that he was calling upon his faithful children to defend and to avenge him; that he wanted them to have land, and they were to help themselves to it; that it would be serving his cause, and would help to release him from the clutches of the nobles if they destroyed and looted their mansions. And having sung the hymn to the Tsar the mob rushed along to do his bidding. First of all, they stopped at the spirit store kept by the Government, which has the sole monopoly of the sale of intoxicants. "Come in and drink the health of our Little Father," cried the agitators, and forthwith they sacked the store, and,

mad with drink, felt still more inclined to carry out the "wishes" of the Emperor. Usually when night came their way back to the village is lighted up by the flames which enveloped the mansions that they had destroyed by fire.

Let us now consider whether complaints of the peasants are justified or not. There is no doubt that taxation is distributed in a most unfair way among the various classes of the population in Russia. The country is divided into a number of Governments or Provinces; in each one of these provinces are a number of Zemstvos, or local councils, elected by the people. The voters must be landowners in the district, and they elect a district Zemstvo, and the district Zemstvo, in its turn, elects the provincial Zemstvo, or sort of County Council. In principle, every voter is eligible as a member of these Councils, but in practice nobody can be elected without the consent of the nobles. The Zemstvos decide all questions relating to roads and to schools, and they have power to impose taxes which, as a rule, are far heavier than those collected by Government. In fact, the local taxation amounts to nearly three times the amount claimed by Government. Below the Zemstvo are the Volost, an aggregation of parishes under an official who is usually a peasant and is elected by the peasants belonging to this Volost. The duty of the man so elected is to gather together the voters, and to get them to decide on the local taxes which have to be paid by the peasants.

As the noblemen do not take part in the elections, they are also debarred from paying any of the taxes so imposed. The taxes on the land are very low and are always many years in arrears ; the noblemen cannot be compelled to pay them because their property cannot be sold out, while the peasants can be sold out if they do not pay their taxes. Their house, it is true, cannot be sold, nor can their implements, but their cattle, their crops, and their furniture are liable.

The property is held under two different forms : communal property, belonging to what we would call the parish, which is responsible for the taxes of its members individually and collectively, and private property, for which each man is responsible for himself. There is also a capitation tax, which is payable by the head of each family ; rates do not exist. The taxes, including Government and local taxation, amount to £2 to £3, which are paid annually by the head of each family.

The revenue of Government is chiefly raised from the spirit monopoly, from indirect taxation, and from a tax of 5 per cent. on the capital used in various commercial houses ; the Government railways, royalties on minerals, and Customs dues form the other main sources from which the Russian Government draws its revenue.

I mentioned just now the spirit monopoly, which is one of the great subjects upon which public opinion is divided in Russia. In former days the

manufacture of spirits was free to every one, a duty being paid to Government on all spirits manufactured according to their strength but regardless of their quality. These spirits were retailed in public-houses, were blended and manipulated in such a way that the Russian peasants were virtually poisoned by unscrupulous publicans. As it was not necessary to obtain a licence before one could open a public-house, any one being free to do so by merely paying a fixed annual sum to Government, and as publicans could not be deprived of a licence or even punished for selling inferior stuff, it will be seen that some reform became absolutely necessary. Count Witte discovered there a means not only of doing good to the people but also of raising an immense revenue for the Government; he abolished all public-houses, but allowed the distillers to continue to manufacture the spirits as of old, but they could dispose of them only to the agents of the Government. These spirits are then rectified and deprived of all impurities in special factories erected by the Government or in distilleries working under the control of the Government, and after being subjected to a minute test they are reduced to the standard degree of strength and disposed of direct to the consumers. No man is, however, allowed to drink anything on the premises of these Government depôts, and all spirits bought have to be taken away. Many of Count Witte's adversaries accuse him of an immoral transaction in making the Government the sole dispenser

of intoxicants to the country ; but it strikes me that the step which he has taken is one which our temperance advocates would consider of immense benefit to their cause if it were possible to copy Count Witte's system in this country.

Income tax exists in the form of a tax on capital. Rates, which mean such a heavy burden to the British householder, are unknown in Russia. The only obligation which the householder has to face is a tax collected by the State, and one which is proportionate to the rent paid for his house or flat. This tax is uniform throughout Russia and only varies according to the importance of the town in which one lives : for this purpose towns are divided into classes, and the tax amounting to 3 or 4 per cent. on low rents goes on increasing to 10 per cent. on rents only paid by the very wealthiest in the land. In St. Petersburg, for instance, on a flat the rent of which amounts to 3000 roubles (£300) the tax payable to Government amounts to 380 roubles (£38) only.

Happy householders !

On the whole, although Russia is wealthy and possesses natural resources the extent of which is only beginning to be ascertained and some of which have only recently begun to be developed, what the country lacks is capital. There are a few very wealthy citizens, but the number of men enjoying incomes above £3000 a year is remarkably small. For instance, there are in St. Petersburg only

300 people who pay £500 for the yearly rental of their houses or flats, and this does not represent a very large or luxurious flat. On the other hand, servants are cheap. You get a well-trained housemaid, who can do lady's-maid's work, for £15 per annum, and £20 are the wages of an excellent cook. In small households young girls coming from the country do the work of a general servant on wages of £5 per annum and often less.

A doorkeeper, responsible for the safety of the house, must be kept in each house, whether it consists of flats or is occupied by a single family. In buildings divided into flats this doorkeeper is bound to report to the police the arrival and departure of any person who comes to the house, and he must hand over their passports to the police; he must also report anything suspicious which he may notice in the place; he must not allow any tenant to behave in a disorderly manner in his flat; and altogether these men can be looked upon as active auxiliaries of the police.

The strictest control is exercised by the Russian police over every person living in Russia. Every individual—whatever his rank and position may be—must have a passport on which full particulars as to his occupation, residence, &c., are given. Whenever a Russian changes his address or even whenever he goes on a visit anywhere—be it only for one day—he must produce his passport to the police and have it endorsed at a cost of one rouble

(two shillings). No hotel or lodging-house keeper can receive a visitor unless he produces his passport. In the event of a Russian contemplating a journey abroad he must obtain, before leaving, the permission of the police, and a minute examination of all passports is made at the frontier. Any one attempting to pass the frontier without having his passport endorsed by the police authorities of the district where he has last resided is liable to arrest and imprisonment.

Foreigners cannot enter Russia without a passport *viséd* by the Russian Consul before leaving their own country ; this passport must be produced at the frontier and handed over to the Russian police on arrival in any hotel or house where you may be stopping. If you change your residence the police must be notified, and your passport has to be once more produced as soon as you reach your new residence. In the case of a foreigner residing more than six months in Russia a Russian passport has also to be obtained.

Persons belonging to the Jewish faith should be most careful when they visit Russia. Some years ago, for instance, Sir Marcus S—— went to St. Petersburg ; his passport had been duly *viséd* at the Russian Consulate in London, but on his arrival at St. Petersburg he was informed that he could not stop in the Capital as, being a Jew, he did not possess the qualifications necessary to entitle him to reside outside boundaries within which Jews are

allowed to reside. In vain he spoke of his right as a British subject ; in vain he got the Embassy to move in the matter ; he was told that he must go—and he left at the end of four days. The gentleman who gave me this information told me that he was not sure whether Sir Marcus was forced to go or whether he went because he felt disinclined to fight any longer for his rights, but he assured me that the case had not been settled when he went away.

Another case is that of a French savant who was sent by the French Government to make researches for some scientific purpose. After spending a few weeks in St. Petersburg he found that he could only find in Moscow the documents which he required, and he therefore proceeded to Moscow. Then, although he was on an official mission from the French Government, accredited by his Embassy, he was ordered to leave Moscow at once because he was a Jew. He produced his credentials, appealed to the French Consul at Moscow and to the French Embassy at St. Petersburg, but to no purpose, and he had to return to France. It was only several months later that, after long negotiations between both Governments, he was able to return to Russia and resume his labours at Moscow.

Nowadays, however, persons belonging to the Jewish faith have only to represent themselves as the agents of a business house, coming to Russia on behalf of their firm, to obtain the necessary permission to visit the country, but it is as well

to take precautions before leaving home and to ascertain at the Russian Consulate what steps should be taken to avoid all possible trouble.

Although small, the sum paid by Russians for the *visa* of their passports and for the issue of fresh ones—which should be obtained every three to four years—represents a serious item in the revenue, amounting to several millions sterling yearly. The population of Russia is over 140 millions of people, all of whom must have a passport and must pay a fee whenever they change their residence and who must also get their passport renewed every few years. Let us take four years as the average time after which fresh passports are issued; this gives 140 million roubles in four years, or 35 million roubles yearly ($3\frac{1}{2}$ millions sterling) to which must be added fees for *visa*, at least half a million yearly, so that the revenue realised in this way is by no means unimportant.

CHAPTER VI

STATISTICS AND THEIR TRAGEDY

THE statistical details which I am about to give may be found in many books of reference ; but it is so easy to miss their true significance that I think it necessary to present them here as essential to a proper appreciation of the conclusions to which, after much personal experience apart from them, I have arrived.

Area.

The Russian Empire covers an area of 2,095,616 square miles in Europe, with a population of 106,265,000, while with its Asiatic dominions it extends altogether over 8,666,395 square miles,

Population.

with a total population for the whole of the Empire of 141 millions. This vast aggregate consists of many different elements ; 75 per cent. of the inhabitants are Slavs, 9 per cent. Tartars, 5 per cent. Finns, and 4 per cent. Jews, the remainder belong to a number of minor races. Poland has a population which exceeds 9,000,000, and, with the Finns and the people of Germanic blood of the Baltic Provinces, they form a large foreign element which

has never reconciled itself to its incorporation with Russia.

The Crown domains cover 1,000,000 square miles, and include many gold and silver mines and rich deposits of other minerals. Crown domains.

The chief towns are: St. Petersburg, with a population of 1,500,000; Moscow, 1,173,000; Warsaw, 771,000; Odessa, 400,000. Chief towns.

Many new lines of railway have recently been constructed, and the system covers a total length of 40,000 miles. The canals and navigable rivers greatly facilitate the means of communication, these waterways covering a total length of 50,000 miles. Railways and canals.

The Empire is divided into 9 general Governments, each under a Governor-general, with full civil and military powers. These large Governments are themselves divided into 78 Governments: 49 in European Russia, 10 in Poland, 8 in Finland, 7 in the Caucasus, and 4 in Siberia. For administrative purposes the Governments are sub-divided again into Districts, each including a number of Communes and Cantons which are equivalent to our parishes. As I have explained in the previous chapter the districts have a kind of self-government with powers vested in assemblies called Zemstvos. These are of two kinds: District Zemstvos, which administer the affairs of the district only; while all the District Zemstvos of each province combine to elect a Provincial Zemstvo equivalent to our County Councils. Sixty to sixty-five members sit on the Provincial divisions.
Local self-government.

District Zemstvos, and these are elected by indirect suffrage. They meet once a year in a session which lasts fifteen days. The Provincial Zemstvos are exclusively composed of nobles; both these assemblies can impose local taxation, which must not exceed 3 per cent. of the value of the real estate of the Province. The governor has a right of veto over all the decisions of these assemblies.

Budget.

The Budget of Russia, according to the figures published in 1904, showed a revenue of £198,000,000 and an expenditure of £191,000,000, but the cost of the war with Japan is not included in these figures.

Public debt.

Russia has a colossal public debt, amounting to £708,000,000, which includes £205,000,000 spent for the acquisition of the railways by the State. In this public debt is included £57,000,000 raised in France and Germany to cover the cost of the war in 1904 as well as £15,000,000 of Treasury Bonds which were issued in 1905, and an internal loan of £15,000,000 which was raised the same year. Little reliance can, of course, be placed on these last figures, as the war must certainly have cost a great deal more than the amounts given above.

Trade.

The trade of Russia is an important one, and amounts to: For imports, £58,000,000; for exports, £95,000,000.

Great Britain is one of Russia's best customers; the exports from England to Russia amount to £15,000,000, and the imports from Russia to

England to £31,000,000, £14,000,000 of the latter representing cereals.

It will therefore be seen that England has the most direct interest in the condition of Russia.

The statistics which I have just given suggest observations which, curiously enough, have been overlooked by most of those who have studied the condition of Russia; neither have the points which I am going to mention been considered by those who are so loud in claiming the most radical reforms in the constitution of the Russian Empire.

In order to show the difficulty which surrounds the administration of Russia we must compare the British with the Russian Empire.

Our own Empire consists of the United Kingdom, with a highly educated population which for centuries has been trained to enjoy liberty, a liberty chiefly due to the manner in which men have grown to understand how to respect the rights of their neighbours. It is by a gradual process that the people inhabiting the United Kingdom have also learned how to govern themselves, and the British Parliament has secured its present position only after long and protracted struggles.

Our Colonies have passed through the same stages of political education, and they have been given full representative rights only after having completed this political education. There we allow the people to pass their own special laws which answer to special local requirements, and these

often differ from the laws in force in the Mother Country ; in the same way we let the people themselves decide on the manner in which the franchise is to be exercised according to local conditions and requirements.

In addition to its Colonies our Empire consists of Possessions—countries where a native coloured race is governed by a small number of white men, and where labour is and can only be supplied by Natives. To govern these Possessions we have to take into consideration the laws, customs, religion of the people themselves, and the system which we employ is based upon these considerations. Each Possession is therefore governed by a different method, and has its special administration.

The system is easy to carry out because there is no geographical connection between the different portions of our Empire, and each Colony or Possession stands independent of the others.

Let us now take the Russian Empire. We find there, grouped together and in close contact, a number of different countries inhabited by different races who present variations as wide, if not wider, than those which exist between the inhabitants of the scattered portions of our own Empire. Part of Russia may be looked upon as a Colonial Empire, but where Russia proper ends and Colonial Russia begins it is almost impossible to determine. Even if we exclude from Russia proper, Siberia and all the countries which surround it, it is impossible to treat

that portion of the Tsar's dominions which stands in Europe as a single homogeneous political unit. Many of the people who inhabit the remote provinces of the interior have no conception of what a constitution and a political system mean. At the same time, there are in many portions of Siberia large communities whose members are entitled to a voice in the affairs of the nation.

Then we must consider that hardly 20 per cent. of the people can read and write, and that for a population of 106,000,000 there are only 90,000 primary schools. Allowing twenty pupils for each school, this gives us less than 3,000,000 children who acquire the most elementary education.

Now to turn to the Administration. The main difficulty which has to be encountered is that the same methods have to be employed in different parts of the Empire, although those parts may present the utmost dissimilarity of climate, race, language, laws and religion. The Russian system does not seem to provide distinct sets of officials for distinct regions. For instance, an official who is serving in the Caucasus will be transferred to Siberia, and later on will be appointed to a post in Turkestan or Manchuria.

I am not blaming the system, I am merely showing how things are: I acknowledge, indeed, that it would be almost impossible to alter it, because, immense as the Russian Empire is, the railways which connect its various portions bring all of

them into such close contact that, as I have said before, they get merged one into the other, and it is hard to say where one begins and the other ends.

The Western Provinces of European Russia, whose inhabitants have fallen under Russian rule comparatively recently, such as Finland, Livonia, the Baltic Provinces, and Poland, are another source of trouble and harassing difficulty. The people of these Provinces, who number nearly 17,000,000, look upon the Russians as oppressors, and although they claim the same political rights as the other Russians, still they insist upon having a political independence of their own.

The position of the Russian Government is in this respect very similar to the position of our own Government with regard to Ireland, but while there is only one Ireland for us Russia has four with which to deal.

Last, but not least, come the Jews, representing 4 per cent. of the total population of Russia. They have been until now subjected to the most abominable treatment, and their position will have to be considered without delay. Nor should it be forgotten that, although their number is small in proportion to the remainder of the population, their education, resources, and superior abilities make their position an important one.

The problem which faces the Russian Govern-

ment is therefore one of unequalled magnitude : the interests of 106,000,000 people have to be considered, and in that huge mass of individuals, the Cabinet has to deal with groups numbering 9,000,000 (Poles), 3,000,000 (Finns), and 6,000,000 (Jews), all of them with conflicting interests, and yet all having rights which must be respected.

But this is not all. As I have just said, people forget that the Cabinet has not only to consider the enormous mass of reforms upon which the Duma will insist, claiming instant satisfaction of its demands, but at the same time the Ministers have to carry out the administration of a vast territory of more than 6,000,000 of square miles, the Asiatic dominions of Russia where nearly 40,000,000 people have to be governed.

The Russian Cabinet has in consequence not only a task of appalling magnitude to accomplish in dealing with the present political situation, but the Ministers have also to perform the work which devolves, with us, upon the Viceroy of India, the Governors, and the responsible Ministers of our various Colonies.

It will therefore be seen how the perusal of the statistics which I have given in this chapter is necessary to form a correct idea of the difficulties which will have to be overcome before Russia can possess a modern Constitutional Government. When we consider the colossal extent of territory and the stupendous agglomeration of people which

have to be dealt with, the task which was undertaken by Count Witte appears almost superhuman, and one cannot help feeling inclined to take a lenient view of many things which one would have had to condemn in different circumstances.

CHAPTER VII

REVOLUTION IN BEING

It is now necessary to cast a rapid glance over the events which followed each other in such rapid succession during the year which has just passed.

When public demonstrations began to reveal the discontent which had been spreading stealthily for some time among all classes of the Russian community, a few men like Father Gapon and Crousstalioff understood that there was a part for them to play, nor were they slow in taking advantage of it.

The working classes had already adopted active measures: the movement began by a strike of the workmen employed at the Putiloff works (the Krupp of Russia), and their example was being followed by many others; the demonstration, however, had stopped there. Father Gapon determined to transform this aimless manifestation into an imposing display of popular political action.

A petition was drawn up, demanding from the Tsar the adoption of a political programme impossible of realisation, yet couched in words which

were bound to attract the general attention in consequence of the apparent moderation with which the most imperious demands were expressed. Still more impressive was to be the manner in which this petition was to be presented to the Tsar.

On January 22, 1905—a Sunday—workmen from every part of St. Petersburg having been collected and brought together by agitators, a procession was formed, and, with Father Gapon at their head, scores of thousands of workmen marched towards the Imperial Palace, carrying their petition. It must be noted here that the Prefect of Police (Chief Commissioner) had at his disposal a force whose number would have already been totally inadequate, under ordinary circumstances, to cope with so large a crowd. It was utterly impossible for them to deal with a multitude ready to take fire at a spark. The police numbered altogether 3000 constables and officers, while the demonstrators consisted of nearly 100,000 people. It must also be noted that strict orders had been given to the police authorities to avoid all measures likely to irritate the people, so that at first they merely tried to keep order without attempting to disperse the crowd, with the result that its number became larger every moment. At last the police found themselves absolutely helpless. If from the beginning the police had been allowed to display sufficient energy to prevent the concentration of demonstrators, it is possible that there might have been slight collisions between the police

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and the crowd, but the subsequent tragedy would have been avoided.

The demonstrators having, as I have said, formed a procession, marched towards the Imperial Palace. When the authorities realised the importance of the demonstration they lost their heads. Many among the Tsar's entourage, and prominent among them—it is said—some of the Grand Dukes, had a vision of the scenes of violence which marked the beginning of the great French Revolution. They saw in imagination the crowd forcing its way into the palace, laying sacrilegious hands on the Tsar and the members of his family, and dragging them either into some dark prison or even to execution. So great was the terror evoked by this picture that orders were hastily sent to stop the demonstration at all costs; under no circumstances were the people to advance any further. Then the troops appeared.

The demonstrators, emboldened by the presence of a priest at their head, did not stop when the soldiers commanded them to do so; in fact, they could not stop, because the huge crowd at their back was pressing them forward with irresistible force. It is here that the tragedy begins: without further warning the troops were ordered to open fire upon the teeming mass of humanity which pressed forward, and every bullet found a mark in the densely packed crowd. It was simple butchery, and it is impossible to find an excuse for the fiend who

gave the order to fire : not only was the order given once, it was repeated.

A cry of horror arose all over Russia, which was echoed throughout the civilized world, and Red Sunday, as this day is now called, became the signal which started all the disorders which have disturbed Russia ever since. The excitement which this butchery created was so intense that it was impossible to foretell what would occur, and a man of iron was needed to cope with the situation. General Trepoff was, therefore (January 24), appointed Governor of St. Petersburg, and at once he adopted the most stringent measures to prevent any attempt which might be made to take advantage of the situation by those who were anxious to create a revolution. Hundreds of arrests were made daily : all the men suspected of liberal tendencies were arrested, even Maxim Gorki, the celebrated Russian novelist, being sent to jail. General Trepoff may be accused of having employed extreme and unnecessarily harsh methods of prevention, but he deserves the highest credit for having saved Russia from the most terrible revolution. Notwithstanding this, riots broke out at Moscow, Riga, Odessa, Lodz, Kovno and many other places.

Martial law was proclaimed in every great centre ; but if it did not bring calm, and even if it did create deeper excitement, still it stopped a general conflagration. Unable to resort to popular demonstrations the revolutionaries meant, however, to prove

their activity, and on February 17 the world was horrified by the news that the Grand Duke Serge had been blown up in Moscow. So terrible had been the effects of the bomb which was thrown at him that his mutilated body was recovered without the head.

In the Caucasus civil war then broke out between the Armenians and the Tartars, while in many other places the railway and telegraph employees went on strike.

On March 3 the Tsar issued a Manifesto which created considerable discontent. Instead of concessions which had been anticipated, the Manifesto contained covert threats against "those who were trying to introduce a new order of things." As a reply the working men's delegates, led by Crōustalioff, at once proclaimed a general strike.

This caused a change of tactics on the part of the Government, and the same day appeared an Imperial Rescript promising a Legislative Assembly. A Commission under M. Buliguine, Minister of Interior, was to be appointed to organize the elections and to settle the distribution of the representatives to be elected in the various portions of the Empire for the new Assembly. Disorders continued, however, to disturb the provinces, and little satisfaction seemed to have been given by the Tsar's promise.

On April 30 a fresh concession was made to the people by a decree conceding liberty of worship to the "Old Believers," the Roman Catholics and the

members of other Churches, Christian, Mohamedan, and Buddhist. This, again, was a concession without practical value, as, although the worshippers of one church could freely pass into another church, the ministers of the church which the convert had joined were punished if they performed any of the rites of marriage, baptism or burial for a convert.


The news of the annihilation of the Russian fleet in the Sea of Japan reached Russia in May, and was followed by a strong agitation in favour of peace. Anticipating grave disorders, the Tsar was induced to give to General Trepoff extraordinary powers : he was appointed Assistant Minister of the Interior, and thus his authority was extended over the whole of Russia.

The disorders which had continued to break out in the Provinces now reached a more acute stage, and in Lodz a sanguinary conflict broke out between the workmen on strike and the police, resulting in heavy loss of life (June 23).

This was soon followed by the mutiny of the crew of the *Kniaz Potemkin*, one of the battleships stationed in the Black Sea ; the sailors killed some of their officers and sent the others ashore. They were then joined by the crew of the *Georgi Pobiedonosetz*, and under the command of Lieutenant Schmidt, a former naval officer who had left the service, the two battleships proceeded to Odessa and held the town at bay. On July 3 the *Georgi Pobiedonosetz* surrendered, and the *Kniaz Potemkin*

soon after also surrendered to the Roumanian authorities at Constanza on July 9. Lieutenant Schmidt was subsequently tried by court-martial and sentenced to death.

The continuance of the disturbances induced the Emperor to try the effect of further concessions, and on August 19 a Manifesto was issued announcing the formation of a Gosondarstvennaia Duma (State Assembly), with broader powers than those which were granted to the previous one. The Minister of the Interior was ordered to make arrangements for the election of deputies in fifty Governments, to meet not later than January 1906. By the same Manifesto a Constitution was also granted providing that the members of the Duma, elected for five years, would have power to meet either in full session or else by sections. The Ministers and heads of departments were not to be members of this Duma, but they would have the right to attend the sittings. This Duma would be competent to formulate new laws, and to alter existing ones. The Budget was to be submitted to the approval of its members. The Duma would also decide all questions concerning State railways, and any other questions which might be submitted to the Assembly by Imperial decree. It must, however, be noted that an important reservation curtailed all its apparent powers. No fundamental law of the Imperial Administration could be touched by the Duma, and all such laws were to stand outside its competence.



The members of the Duma were to receive £1 per day and their travelling expenses. The public was not to be admitted to its deliberations, and the representatives of the Press were to be excluded from all "closed sessions." All bills passed by the Duma were to go to the Council of State, who would, after examining them, report on them to the Emperor. In case of conflict between the Duma and the Council of State, the matter in dispute was to be examined by a Commission composed of an equal number of members of both Assemblies.

Not only did this Manifesto fail to give satisfaction, it caused considerable irritation, as it gave the impression of having been issued by the Tsar with the object of deceiving his people by leading them to imagine that they were granted some form of popular representation, while, as a matter of fact, the restrictions which curtailed its rights made the Duma quite powerless.

In September the Caucasus became the scene of the most terrible fighting between Tatars and Armenians. The loss of life was enormous, the damage to property appalling. Yet, for a long time Government remained inactive, and it seemed as if its policy was to let the people exhaust themselves until they would cease to be in a position to rise against the Administration.

Strong representations were, however, addressed by the British Government to the Russian Foreign Office in consequence of the critical position of many

British subjects whose interests and whose lives were in imminent danger in consequence of the inaction of the Administration. The Russian Government was urged to send at once a force sufficient to protect them, and this was at last done, but too late, as British property had already suffered considerable damage at the hands of the insurgents, who had set fire to most of the oil wells in which British capital to a considerable amount is interested.

It is almost impossible to calculate the extent of the loss which has been caused in this part of Russia through the inaction of the Government, as in addition to the losses incurred in consequence of the destruction of property, enormous losses have resulted from the cessation of all work—100,000 men having been reduced to idleness for a protracted period of time.

On September 25 a Congress of the Provincial Zemstvos was held at Moscow, in which 300 delegates represented the various provincial assemblies. Among other things the Congress protested against the restrictions imposed upon the Duma promised by the Emperor. The Congress declared that under these conditions the Assembly would lack all the essentials of national representation; they urged those, however, who had the political freedom of Russia at heart to seek election to the Duma so as to have an opportunity of making their protests heard by the nation. The Congress also declared itself in favour of direct and universal suffrage. In

the meantime Croustaliouff had, as I have explained before, organized the "Association of Associations" of the various branches of trade, and when he felt that he held the men well in hand he got the railway employees to proclaim a general strike at St. Petersburg and Moscow (October 21). The impression caused by these demonstrations greatly contributed to hasten the issue of the Manifesto of October 30, by which the Tsar at last granted to his people liberties and rights far beyond anything which they might have expected. It was more than a Magna Charta in so far as it not only defined liberties but created freedom.

But, as I have already said, Russia is not ripe for the liberties which have been granted by this Manifesto, but it will be understood how circumstances made it imperative to put an end to the policy of half-measures which had so far been followed, a policy which had resulted in such disastrous consequences during the previous months. Even the promises made by the Manifesto of October 30* failed to give satisfaction then because the people had grown so accustomed to mistrust the promises previously made to them.

Here are the main points of the Manifesto as expressed in its text :

* The Russian calendar is thirteen days behind ours, and this document is therefore known in Russia as the Manifesto of October 17, a date to which I shall stick in future because of its historical association.

- (1) To grant the population the immutable foundation of civic liberty based on real inviolability of the person and freedom of conscience, speech, union and association.
- (2) Without deferring the Elections of the State Duma already ordered, to call to participation in the Duma, as far as possible, in view of the shortness of the time before Duma is to assemble, those classes of the population now completely deprived of electoral rights ; the ultimate development of the principles of the electoral right in general to be in accordance with the newly established legislative order of things.
- (3) To establish it as an immutable rule that no laws can come into force without the approval of the Duma, and that it shall be possible for the elected of the people to exercise a real participation in the supervision of the legality of the acts of the Authorities appointed by us.

A responsible Cabinet was then formed, with Count Witte at its head.

The composition of the Cabinet was as follows : Interior, M. Durnovo ; Finance, M. Ivan Shepoff ; Education, Count Tolstoi ; Agriculture, M. Kulter ; Commerce, M. Timiriazeff ; Marine, Admiral Biritseff ; War, General Rodiger ; Foreign Office, Count Lamsdorff ; Justice, M. Mannikin ; Minister of the Imperial Household, Baron Fredericks.

The strikers were not satisfied by the Tsar's

concessions, and demanded the convocation of a "Constituante," elected by universal and direct suffrage, without distinction of sex, creed, or nationality. They insisted that civic freedom be given to all. At Warsaw, Odessa, and other places severe rioting broke out once, and again many lives were sacrificed. At the same time at Kieff, Kishineff, and in many other towns anti-Jewish outrages were perpetrated, if not at the instigation, at least with the complicity, of the authorities.

Hoping to conciliate the people, a fresh concession was granted to them, and on November 3 an amnesty was proclaimed for all political outrages up to October 30, four days before the date of the proclamation. But this seemed to have no effect in calming the general excitement. On November 4 the civil engineers held a great meeting, at which they passed a resolution declaring that the money of the nation had been used to create an agitation for the purpose of inciting the mob against the progressive elements of society, against the "Intellectuals," against the students, the workmen, and the Jews, in the hope that a counter revolution would be organized by this means. They added that it was no secret that the organizers of all the acts of violence which had lately taken place were the police, with General Trepoff at their head. And they added: "We declare that further delay in dismissing General Trepoff will be regarded by all as an open challenge to the nation.

We therefore demand that General Trepoff and all the officials guilty of violence, guilty of shooting peaceful demonstrators, guilty of massacres of innocent citizens, shall be handed over to a court that will punish them according to their deserts."

What will show the state of mind of those in power at the time, is that instead of punishing the men who had passed this resolution, who had addressed so strong and decidedly impertinent a demand, Government left them undisturbed and General Trepoff was removed from his exalted position five days later. He was replaced by General Dedouline.

The same day a great mutiny broke out among the sailors at Cronstadt, who were joined by the garrison artillery. The movement was, however, soon crushed, and within twenty-four hours order had been restored. On the 15th of the same month grave disorders had also broken out at the other end of the Empire. The troops quartered at Vladivostock having heard of what was going on in Russia were carried away by the spirit of imitation, that extraordinary characteristic of the Russians upon which I have already insisted so often, and they sacked the town, destroyed it, killed the Governor, many of the officers, and massacred all the citizens who were unable to escape. Although order had been restored at Cronstadt and the mutiny reduced to a simple demonstration, the

mutineers were sent before a court-martial. In consequence of the riots which had taken place in Poland, Government had also decided that the Poles should be excluded from the benefits conferred upon the people by the Tsar's Manifesto of August 18 and October 17. As a protest against those measures the Central Labour Committee, moved by the inevitable Croustaliouff, decreed another general strike, which began on November 15. As usual fresh concessions followed this fresh demonstration. This time it was thought desirable to conciliate the peasants, and on November 17 a fresh Manifesto was issued, reducing by half the payments which had to be made by them to liquidate the balance still due on the land which had been granted to them when the serfs were liberated. This concession was to date from January 1, 1906, and the Manifesto further abolished altogether these payments after January 1, 1907. On the 20th the general strike came to an end. On the 19th a fresh congress of the Zemstvo had met at Moscow, consisting of delegates from all the provincial assemblies; the delegates expressed once more their determination to support the universal suffrage instead of the indirect and limited franchise which had been granted by the Manifesto of October 17. The delegates, however, promised to support Count Witte's Cabinet, "so long as it would correctly and consistently carry on the constitutional principles of the Manifesto," adding that every departure from

these principles would be met with a resolute counter action.

Quiet had only just been restored in St. Petersburg when fresh rioting began in Sebastopol ; the naval and military forces broke out in open revolt and were joined by the workmen ; they captured the town, shot Admiral Pischerevski, and seized the railway. Troops were sent against them, and a great battle was fought on November 28, resulting in the defeat of the rebels. This was no sooner over than Cronstadt became the scene of fresh rebellion, and on November 30 the employees of the postal and telegraph departments went out once more on strike because they had been forbidden to form themselves into a trade union.

The month of December marked the most eventful period of the revolutionary movement.

At the end of November the telegraphists, as I have said, went on strike, a movement which culminated in a general strike of the post and telegraph clerks. This began on December 2 and lasted for five days, during which Government was absolutely cut off from communication with the remainder of Russia.

It is, I think, the most colossal demonstration of the kind which has ever been known, the strike involving 1,000,000 men, who stopped work at the same time.

Public life may be said to have been absolutely paralysed in Russia while this strike lasted, and it is impossible to calculate the amount of the loss which

resulted from it. Government itself was absolutely isolated for a time, both from the outside world and from the interior of Russia, and the manner in which Count Witte had provided for the contingency speaks highly for his foresight as a Statesman. Those who now complain so bitterly that martial law has been in force ever since in so many of the provincial Governments forget that it has been the consequence of this strike. St. Petersburg and Moscow were even threatened with famine.

Following the example of the Sebastopol mutineers, who had seized the *Olchakoff* and three other vessels, the sailors of Reval also mutinied. In both cases the rebels were assured that their action was not inconsistent with their loyalty to the Tsar, and it is interesting to see this fact mentioned in the *Times* in a despatch from its correspondent, as it confirms what I have said, and will have occasion to say, on the subject further on.

The impression made upon Government by the consequences of the general strike can be gathered from the fact that Count Witte, strong man as he is, showed the only indication of weakness which can be found in his conduct of affairs during those anxious times. On December 5 he issued an official *communiqué*, declaring that while Government was determined to carry out the reforms promised by the Manifesto of October 17 (old style), yet it was impossible to accustom at once the whole of the population to the new order of things. The reforms would have to be

carried out by formal legislation, and until this should have been done the old laws must remain in force.

This reads almost like an apology for not having carried out the promises made by the Tsar, and was—I think—a mistake, particularly as it had no satisfactory result.

On December 7 the post and telegraph strike ended, because the clerks were unable to stand out any longer ; funds had run short, and most of them had been reduced to starvation. The only concession which was made to them by Government was the cancelling of the dismissal of those who had formed a union.

This lull, however, did not long continue, as on December 9 a general strike was once more threatened.

Meanwhile the revolutionary movement assumed a threatening aspect in the Baltic Provinces, and on December 12 the Governor-General received powers conferring upon him unlimited authority with dictatorial rights. This was followed two days later by open revolution.

On December 20 a general strike began at Moscow, and on December 22 the railways and factories were all stopped by the strike of the employees ; 100,000 men are calculated to have stopped work at that time in St. Petersburg. That same day barricades were erected in Moscow, and the revolutionaries rose in arms. It was only on

December 29, after days of desperate fighting, that the insurrection was put down.

While this deadly struggle was going on at Moscow armed risings were also taking place in other towns. Barricades were erected, for instance, at Kharkoff, and they were only captured after severe fighting.

Never, therefore, had a minister to face so desperate a situation as the one which confronted Count Witte at the end of last year—armed insurrection in Moscow, Kharkoff, the Baltic Provinces, and a score of other places throughout the vast Russian Empire ; civil war in the Caucasus ; unrest in Finland and Poland ; Jewish massacres constantly occurring ; dissatisfaction in the Navy ; and, to make matters worse, an inadequate number of troops to cope with the revolutionary movement, most of the soldiers who could be relied on being still in Manchuria. Add to this the ever-recurring threat of a renewal of the great strike of post and telegraph clerks, and one sees that if ever a man had his hands full that man was Count Witte. He had to face what looked remarkably like “red ruin and the breaking up of laws.”

CHAPTER VIII

THE MAKING OF REVOLUTIONARIES

I HAVE alluded, in the previous chapters, to the amazing spirit of imitation which is so characteristic of the Russian people. Of course, in the mass, all people are imitative, but the more uneducated the mass the more the spirit prevails. The following first-hand narrative from a Russian workman will give some idea of how easy it is to lead simple-minded people into follies, the consequences of which they are unable to foresee. As far as possible I give the story in the narrator's own words :

"As soon as the general strike had been proclaimed, on December 20, the revolutionaries established their headquarters along the railway line at Podmoskovnoïa. Their object was to use the railway in order to visit the numerous factories which stand close to the line.

"A train arrived at our factory carrying some 200 revolutionaries, fifty of whom carried arms. When they reached our place they forced their way inside the factory and called upon us to stop work, threatening, if we refused, to destroy the place and

to attack us. One of the leaders then climbed upon a table while a red flag was being waved above his head, and in virulent language began to address us. He called us Judases, and said that we were traitors not to have yet joined the strike. He then called upon every one—the women excepted—to attend a great meeting which was to be held at Podnoskovnaïa, where a special train, which was waiting, would carry us. Not feeling anxious to join the revolution many of us attempted to sneak away to our houses.

“This was, however, noticed by some of the leaders, who at once sent some of their armed followers to the ‘barracks’ where the workmen of the factory were quartered, and having fired shots and threatened to kill all the men whom they might catch indoors, they so terrified the women and children that they gave away the hiding-place of husbands and fathers. From these refuges they were driven out by the agitators.

“We were then entrained, and on reaching Podnoskovnaïa we found, in an engine-shed, some 2000 men, among whom were a few railway employees. The majority of the people gathered there were workmen from other factories, who had been ‘convinced’ by the same methods as those used towards us.

“Speeches were made, each speaker telling us that at last the day had come when liberty would prevail and capitalists would cease to crush us under their

heel. It was our duty to fight with every means in our power against the existing state of things: victory would follow us, and then we would all share the spoils and divide between ourselves the loot from the householders and factory-owners, whose property would be sacked. Instead of slaves we would become masters. We were made to swear upon another red flag to overthrow Government and to crush its representatives.

"One of us shyly asked, 'how we were going to live until we became masters in our turn?' The leaders unhesitatingly answered that they would send us waggon-loads of flour, barley, and other provisions, and that we need have no concern in the matter.

"It is true that when the band which came to our factory arrived there our dinner had just been prepared, and they consumed everything which was ready, leaving us nothing. It seemed rather strange that men who had the disposal of such amounts of stores should appear so hungry, but we imagined that they had not yet been able to arrange matters, and that the leaders had had no time to forward bread and provisions.

"Excited by the promises which had been made to us we threw ourselves body and soul into the movement. Some of us in our turn proceeded to the town of Mosskressensk in order to enlist the hands of the Popoff cloth factory, but on the way we heard that the road was guarded by artillery, and accordingly

we stopped our train, which we left in charge of an armed detachment, and proceeded to sack the Government spirit stores at Nakhabino. We got royally drunk, and on our way back we sacked an inn and a restaurant. The peasants threatened to destroy the station if we did not clear, and we therefore returned to our headquarters. We then went by train to a store where we were told that there was a good deal of money. We sacked the place and took the money—although it was taken from us afterwards. Our leaders ordered us, under threat of death in case of disobedience, to cut down the telegraph and telephone posts : they then suggested that we should be armed and drilled so as to go to support our ‘brothers’ who were fighting for the revolution in Moscow. This quite sobered us, and we all cleared off under cover of the night. We went to the factory and, hastily collecting our few belongings, marched off to our homes. The workmen in these factories come from distant villages and are housed in barracks attached to the factory, but they do not look upon this as home. Those whose villages were only sixty or eighty miles away, walked there, while those who lived too far to walk, and could not use the railway, which had ceased working, dispersed themselves in various villages, where they knew that the revolutionaries would not come and hunt them up.

“We now congratulate ourselves,” concluded the narrator, “upon having kept away from Moscow.

It will take many a day before we can be persuaded to follow those who promise us liberty and bring us only starvation."

Now it is pretty clear that these men were dragged into becoming revolutionaries. They were not fighting intelligibly for a principle, but out of fear and in anticipation of loot. It is hardly of such stuff that great revolutionary movements are made.

CHAPTER IX

THE PROBLEM OF EDUCATION

ALTHOUGH it is often alleged that Russia's condition is chiefly due to the lack of education among the people, yet I will show that the people who want to give their children a superior education can do so at a cost which makes it accessible to all, however humble their circumstances. On the other hand, only those who care to give education to their children need do so, and it is for that reason that we find at the same time a large section of the population absolutely void of the most elementary education together with a comparatively large number of people in most humble circumstances whose children possess a superior education. What is also a striking fact is that, although a mass of knowledge is imparted to the pupils in the higher schools, no attempt is made to teach them to *think*. They learn facts, but cause and effect are subjects into which they are never initiated. The result is that you find men whose conversation shows them to possess a very sound

and extensive erudition, and yet who reason on most subjects like a child of twelve ; in fact, many English boys of twelve possess a far clearer conception of the practical side of life than most Russians who have reached manhood.

The lowest schools in Russia are the primary schools, where reading and writing and the most simple principles of arithmetic are taught. These schools are of two kinds, ecclesiastical and secular. The former are in charge of the priests, who are usually grossly ignorant, imbued with narrow ideas and superstitious to the highest degree. Not long ago, for instance, a conjurer in a provincial town used some hall belonging to the administration for his performance, and many of the children went to see it. The priest wrote to his bishop to ask him to use his influence to have the conjurer lodged in prison, adding that it was monstrous that the authorities should have given their support to this emissary of Satan, who ought to have been put to death for practising his Satanic craft in the presence of Christians. Such are the men who teach children in the religious schools.

For a population of 140 millions of subjects who inhabit Russia only 90,000 primary schools are at the disposal of those who want to educate their children.

The State contributes ten millions of roubles (one million sterling) towards the parish schools.

From inquiries I found that the Province of

Vologda is the one where the school attendance is the highest, and the Oural district where it is the lowest.

In the countries, however, where the Lutherans predominate—in the Baltic provinces, for instance—the schools are obligatory, because children cannot be confirmed if they have not attended school. The same applies to the German settlements.

The organization of the Government schools is good, but the position of the masters is an impossible one. They get an average of £2 per month in addition to a house; women are even worse off, as some of them only earn £1 10s. per month. The complete course of the primary schools lasts three years. Next to them come the high schools, with a five years' course. The pupils are taught geography, Russian history, mathematics, and a little geometry. The pupils who have completed the five years' course in a high school can then enter a seminary to become schoolmasters. Those also who have successfully passed the final examination on the subjects taught in these schools need serve only one year in the army. At present five years is the full term which every Russian is supposed to serve in the active army, but the men are usually sent home on furlough at the end of three and a half years. The present Cabinet hopes to reduce this to two years, as in France and Germany. I should mention here that soldiers are not supposed

to leave the army until they can read and write, but this regulation is not rigidly enforced.

Count Tolstoi, the Minister of Education, who supplied me with all this information about education, pointed out to me that he considered that the education of the girls required special attention, and was a question of the utmost importance. "Teach the girls," he said, "and you are teaching at the same time the boys in the future, because a mother who has a good education is sure to teach her children, and I consider that a thousand women who have had a good training at school will do more for the children than fifty new schools."

The policy followed by the various Governments which have succeeded each other within the last fifty years has invariably been to spend any amount of money on education in the provinces on the outskirts of the Empire, such as the Baltic Provinces, Poland, &c., in order to "Russify" them. In Poland, for instance, the schoolmasters were supposed to use only Russian in all they taught to their pupils. As a matter of fact they used Polish, and taught just enough Russian to the children to enable them to use that language when the inspectors came for their yearly visit. Count Tolstoi himself is absolutely in favour of leaving complete liberty in the matter of language, making it only compulsory for all examinations to be passed in Russian. "It is only," he remarked, "what is done in the law

courts. The local laws are recognized, but all the business of the courts is transacted in the Russian language."

It should be noted that in the matter of education the Russian Government has always been very liberal, as Protestant, Jewish and Mahomedan schools are supported by the State.

The secondary education is given in "gymnasias" and "real schools," *i.e.*, *realistic* schools. The difference between the two is that in the gymnasium the education consists of Latin (Greek used to be taught but has been abolished), modern languages (two are obligatory, either English and French, or English and German, or German and French), history, geography, mathematics, algebra, geometry, chemistry, &c. &c. In fact, the programme is similar to the one adopted in the schools of most countries.

In the "real schools" no Latin is taught, attention being chiefly bestowed upon modern languages, mathematics, physics, chemistry, &c. A special course to which the last year is devoted embraces all subjects connected with commerce—book-keeping, shipping, banking; in fact, all subjects which can be of use to business men, these schools having been founded, mainly for children who are being prepared for business. The full course in the gymnasium lasts eight years, in the real school seven and a half years. The cost of those schools is absurdly small; it varies according to the school,

but in St. Petersburg the cheapest gymnasium costs fifty roubles (£5) per annum, and the most expensive comes to £10.

Some gymnasia take boarders, for whom they charge from 300 to 350 roubles (£30 to £35) per annum. This includes the cost of education, board, lodging, and medical attendance; the only extras consist in the cost of the clothes, which the parents have to provide. As may be seen, the cost of superior education is infinitesimal compared with what it is in this country.

The gymnasia, however, are overcrowded; in some of them over 1000 pupils are educated. The regulations stipulate that not more than forty boys are to be under a single master, and when there are more than forty boys in one form a second form should be opened under another master. But this regulation is never observed, and many masters have sixty pupils in their forms.

A special regulation has been made for the Jews: not more than 5 per cent. of the total number of new pupils admitted every year into the schools can be Jews, so that if 200 pupils enter the school one year only ten Jews can join it. Very few of the Christian pupils go through the whole course, but the Jews invariably remain until they have been through every form; so that in the upper forms the proportion of Jews very often amounts to one half of the Christians in the same form. The reason why the Jews stick to their studies is that it is a

matter of vital importance to them. To begin with, if they pass the final examination on leaving the gymnasium they have only to serve one year in the army, and when they have finished their university course and obtained their degree they are debarred from the restrictions which affect the other Jews ; for instance, they are free to reside wherever they like. But here, again, we find an example of the systematic unfairness of the laws which affect the Jews. The same restriction applies to the entrance to the university as to the schools : thus only 5 per cent. of the total number of students admitted every year can be Jews. All the Christian boys who have passed their final examination on leaving the gymnasium can enter the university without being called upon to undergo a fresh examination ; but not so the Jews. Every effort seems to have been made to debar them from deriving full benefit from the very scant privileges which have been granted to them.

The professors of the gymnasia are taken from students of the universities who have passed the special course. They are paid according to the number of lessons which they have to give, with a minimum of twelve lessons per week, for which they receive £100 per annum. Professors, however, receive on an average £200 per annum in the gymnasia and the "real schools." Boys who have left the gymnasia and the real schools, after passing successfully the final examination, are

entitled to enter special technical schools, such as the mining school and the technological school, where civil engineers are trained.

Young men who want to join the army can do so by passing through one of the special schools for military students. There is first the "cadet corps," which boys must enter before they have reached the age of ten. This cadet corps is open to all on passing an entrance examination. There are two other cadet corps in St. Petersburg, into which only the sons of officers and children belonging to the nobility are admitted. There is also a naval school, open to all, but the sons of sailors, soldiers, and noblemen are privileged, and in the classification of the entrance examination they pass before all others. Children remain in the cadet corps for a period of seven years, after which they have to serve during two years in a practical military school—artillery, cavalry, or infantry—and it is only on leaving it that they get their full commission as officers. The full course of the cadet schools lasts for seven years, but boys are not compelled to start from the very lowest form. Those who wish to do so must be at least nine years old and not more than eleven when they enter the school. Others who can pass a special examination may join from the age of ten up to twelve, and by passing a still more difficult examination boys from eleven to fourteen are admitted to these cadet corps.

There are nine universities in Russia, each university being divided into a number of special sections — law, science, philology and history, Oriental languages, medicine, and in one university, at Dorpart, a section of Lutheran theology is provided for young men who wish to become Protestant ministers. In St. Petersburg medicine is not taught at the universities, but there is a special school of medicine, where the training lasts five years. The full course for the other subjects taught in the universities is four years. The cost of education in these universities is practically nominal, amounting to only £10 per annum. The number of students is considerable, the St. Petersburg University numbering over 5000, a number which is exceeded by the Moscow University. In the other universities the number of students averages 2000.

A peculiarity of the methods upon which Russian society is constituted, is that every man who has been either through a gymnasium or through a university is reckoned as belonging to a certain class (tshin). There are altogether fourteen classes, and when you leave the university you pass *ipso facto* into the tenth class, which is considered privileged; for instance, you cease to be a peasant if your parents were peasants, and if you enter the Administration you take rank in the tenth class. One of the reasons why the universities are so crowded is that all liberal professions can be entered only

through them. You cannot become a lawyer, a solicitor, or a doctor without having been through the university ; and if you wish to join the Administration the fact of having a university degree ensures you a position in the Civil Service. So far as the Jews are concerned, a university degree confers upon them, as I have already explained, the right of residing wherever they like, and it opens to them also the doors of the Administration. The Diplomatic Service is entered by passing special examinations, particularly in French and International Law, for which a year's preparation is necessary. Most of the young men entering the Diplomatic Service come from one of the two privileged schools :

(1) Imperial Lycée.

(2) School of Law (under the control of the Minister of Justice).

These schools can only be entered by the sons of noblemen or of high officials holding a rank which places them on a par with noblemen. The Imperial Lycée is only open to the sons of men whose family belongs to the old nobility, or to the sons of lieutenant-generals and of privy councillors. The school of law* (although this name does not imply that law is exclusively taught there) is open to sons of noblemen of a lower grade and to the children of major-

* Most of the pupils who have been in the school become judges or lawyers.

generals and of "actual" State councillors. The final examinations passed on leaving these schools confer the ninth degree. These schools are most unpopular on account of their exclusiveness.

Education in Russia is limited to a very small number of people, hardly 20 per cent. of the total population being able to read and write. The Cossacks are, curiously enough, the people among whom the greatest number of schools is to be found. All of them are very rich and the position they occupy is unique. In olden days the Cossack officers were not paid like the other officers in the Russian army. When a Cossack received his commission 2400 acres of land were allotted to him, and when he became colonel a fresh grant of land of 2400 acres was again made to him. He held these estates for his lifetime, and at his death they reverted to the whole community of the Cossacks, which consequently became dangerously rich. The system has now been abolished, and Cossack officers receive pensions instead of a grant of land.

All the officials are entitled to a limited pension after twenty-five years' service under the crown, and to a full pension at the end of thirty-five years' service. In the educational department, however, none but professors at one of the universities are entitled to a pension. This amounts to £240 after twenty-five years' service and £300 after thirty-five years the pension being paid even in the case of

the recipient's receiving another appointment; for instance, in the case of a professor at the university being made a senator or placed in charge of some department.

The Senate is the supreme court of the Empire, and corresponds to the Court of Cassation in France, but in addition its members meet to interpret the laws, and no law can be put in force until it has been previously passed and approved of by the Senate.

Ministers submit to the Senate the Ukases which are to be promulgated, and the Emperor's A.D.C.s are also competent to lay before this Senate any law sanctioned by the Emperor.

The Grand Dukes, however, do not enjoy this privilege, and the case has occurred where a Grand Duke submitted to the Senate a law passed by the Emperor, but the Senate refused to consider it because it came before its members through an unauthorized channel. The object of this provision is to prevent the Grand Dukes from putting pressure upon the Tsar to get him to sign some ukase to their advantage, which they would then hasten to present to the Senate in order to get it passed into law. In consequence, however, of the rule which has been established, whatever pressure the Grand Dukes may exercise on the Emperor to make him sign laws which they are anxious to impose is absolutely without effect, because the Senate cannot consider the document, and consequently cannot

sanction a measure of which it is officially ignorant.

The Senators enjoy the most absolute independence; they are appointed for life and they cannot be removed even by the Tsar himself. They are appointed by the Emperor, who fixes the amount of salary which shall be paid to each one of them without limit. The minimum allowed to a Senator is about £700 a year, to which must be added a salary or pension. He is always selected from among some of the most prominent officials. Others receive several thousands yearly; as I have already said, there is no rule, the matter resting entirely with the Tsar; once the amount is fixed, however, it cannot be reduced.

I have spoken of the part played by the priests in matters of education, and I must therefore deal with the education of the priests themselves. They are trained either in seminaries or else in ecclesiastical academics. Many village priests have been ordained without having gone through the whole curriculum of the seminary, and the education of some of them consists merely of what they have learnt at an ecclesiastical primary school. The ecclesiastical academics are really theological universities frequented only by those who hope to reach the highest dignities of the Church.

In theory the priests are supposed to be elected by their congregations, but this rule is never observed.

There are many dissenters from the Orthodox Church, the most important sect being the "Old Believers," who strictly observe the principle of the election of the clergy. They have no bishops, while the real Orthodox Church has a complete hierarchy. The Orthodox Church is governed by the Holy Synod, which appoints the bishops and decides all ecclesiastical matters. Nominally the Tsar, as Tsar, is the head of the Orthodox Church, but at the same time, as man, he is one of the "children" of the Church. In his capacity of head of the Church he appoints a procurator to represent him in all his dealings with the Holy Synod. The procurator needs to be a clever diplomatist, as it is necessary that he should direct the policy of the Holy Synod, and let its members imagine that all the measures which he lays before them are due to their own initiative. In fact, he must manage to have his own way and yet appear to act only as representative of the executive power.

The State supports the ministers of all the recognized churches—Orthodox, Roman Catholics, Protestants, Jews, Mohamedans, Lamaists, and Buddhists.

All marriages are exclusively performed and registered by the various churches to which the bridegroom and his bride belong. Until the issue of the Manifesto of October 17, although liberty of conscience was supposed to exist, yet the liberty consisted in allowing people to pray in whatever

church they liked ; all marriage ceremonies, funerals, and baptisms, however, had to be performed by the minister of the church to which a man originally belonged. Thus, in the event of a priest of the Orthodox Church marrying a converted Protestant, not only was the marriage void but also the priest who performed the ceremony was punished. Now this has been altered—in theory—but it has not yet been possible to make the reform operative in practice.

Government cannot be blamed, for it must be remembered that liberty of conscience does not simply involve questions of faith, but that it also carries with it a mass of intricate consequences which do not strike the casual observer. For instance, it seems to matter little if a man is married at the synagogue or in the Orthodox Church. Yet, the moment a Jew should be allowed to become a Christian he would cease to be subjected to all these restrictions which surround his race ; and, bad as these are, to eradicate them suddenly would mean an 'economical revolution. If a Mohamedan suddenly turned Christian the whole of the contingent interests which his relatives held on his estates, property, &c., would be affected. To take but one point. What would be the status of his wives, of his children by women whom the Mohamedan laws recognize as his lawful wives, towards whom he has legal duties which would cease the moment their husband became a Chris-

tian? As will be seen, in a country like Russia where the population is formed of the most heterogeneous elements, each with special laws and customs totally different from the laws of other parts of the Empire and other sections of the community, it is a matter of the utmost difficulty to establish a new condition of things. One has, therefore, to guard against the danger of seriously damaging the interests of one section of the people by bringing sudden changes which may benefit another section. The moral satisfaction which certain reforms may give to a thousand people is of very little moment compared with the material damage which these changes may entail on fifty others. It is, therefore, almost impossible to establish that uniform system which is the aim of idealists.

As will be seen, this question of liberty of conscience, apparently so simple, assumes gigantic proportions if we come to consider all the issues which it involves, and this will enable the reader to realise what an enormous mass of conflicting interests has to be considered before any of the main points of the Tsar's Manifesto can be dealt with to the universal satisfaction.

I feel confident that many of my readers must acknowledge that the inherent complications of this subject have not struck them before. The problem which Count Witte has to solve will now appeal to them in its true light. If the great Russian states-

man, in whose hands the fate of Russia now rests, succeeds in carrying out the overwhelming task which he has taken upon his shoulders, he will receive the eternal gratitude of Russia. But even if his enemies triumph in their miserable game, Count Witte will none the less deserve to take a place in history among those who have influenced for good the destinies of their country and of the world.

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CHAPTER X

THE RISE AND DEGRADATION OF THE JEWS

To understand the present unhappy position of the Jews in Russia it is necessary to give a brief account of how restriction was heaped upon restriction until at last freedom became less than a name.

When Catherine II. (1762) conquered Poland, Livonia, and Lithuania, she found Jews there who became Russian subjects. Equality before the law was proclaimed, and nothing was said or done to compel the Jews to remain where they were then settled. They did so, therefore, not by compulsion but because their language and habits, being different from those of their conquerors, there was nothing to induce them to move into Russia proper.

It was under Paul I. that the first law was passed prohibiting the Jews to leave the region in which they were settled.

The Jews first attracted special attention in 1804, when, in consequence of a great famine which was

devastating the province of Minsk, the Emperor Alexander I. sent the celebrated poet Derjavin to inquire into the economic condition of this province. His report dealt almost exclusively with the Jews, whom he hated, and therefore he insisted upon the fact that the distress was due to the manner in which the Jews were oppressing the people. He maintained that the charge was unanswerable.

It must be remarked that in Poland there existed no middle class; there were only great landlords and poor people, the Jews being the intermediary between them. As the result of this report the Jews were forbidden to enter Russia proper, and they were also prohibited from settling in the rural districts of those provinces where they lived.

Nicolas I., however, tried to deal with the Jews in such a way as gradually to lead them to be absorbed among the remainder of the population. The zone within which the Jews might settle included 15 governments (provinces) belonging to Poland, Lithuania, and New Russia, near Odessa. Special taxes were levied to help to support the Jewish schools and the Jewish church. This policy was continued under Alexander II. (1856). A Commission was appointed under Count Bludoff to examine the Jewish question, and the Commissioners recommended methods by which the Jews would gradually become assimilated with the remainder of the Russian population.

Men in business were first dealt with; they were

divided into three classes. The first was to consist of people having been in trade for at least five years without bankruptcy ; these were said to belong to the First Guild, and they were allowed to go and settle in Russia proper, and after remaining there for ten years longer in business they secured the permanent right of residence in Russia proper without being compelled to remain in business.

The Second Guild included all the Jews who had passed through the university and had obtained a degree of law and medicine. They also enjoyed the right of settlement in any part of Russia which they might select.

In 1865 Jewish artizans (having a special trade) were also given the right of settlement in Russia proper, and in 1872 the same privilege was granted to chemists and midwives.

When conscription was adopted in 1874 the Jews were allowed to become soldiers, and could even obtain officers' commissions. They were also allowed to send their children to school, and, as will be seen, the policy was to promote assimilation by all possible means. When, however, in 1876 the Nihilist movement began to assert itself, a complete change took place in the methods devised for the treatment of the Jews.

It is a remarkable fact that any radical change of policy which has taken place in Russia has always been preceded with measures dealing with the Jews. This, I suppose, because they were

looked upon as a small section of the population specially created for experiments.

Notwithstanding this reactionary tendency of the year 1876 a Commission was appointed under Prince Lobanoff Rostoski to examine the Jewish question. The Commissioners strongly recommended the abolition of all the restrictions imposed upon the Jews, but instead of doing this the Tsar abolished the Commission itself.

In 1881 Alexander II. was assassinated just as he was on the point of signing a decree granting a Constitution to Russia. Alexander III. succeeded him on March 1, and it was at the end of April that the first popular manifestations against the Jews began. Without warning, Jewish property was destroyed at Elisabethgrad, Kieff, and to the south-west of Russia, the officials merely looking on.

Just then Count Ignatieff sought to distract attention from the revolutionary movement, rapidly growing; the mal-administration of the provinces gave him the opportunity. M. Polotzoff was sent to report on the administration at Kieff, Podoli and Voldini. In these provinces many abuses were discovered. At Kieff, for instance, a certain X. had been convicted eight years previously, but, being out on bail when sentence was passed, he had absconded, and a vain search had been made for him ever since. The inspector now discovered that the absconded convict was holding a Government appointment, and that the office in which he

had been at work ever since his conviction, was situated in a room adjoining that occupied by the official who had issued the warrant against him. Many such cases were brought to light, and the officials, anxious to divert attention from these unpleasant facts, organized for the purpose disorders against the Jews.

In the following spring fresh demonstrations resulted in the destruction of Jewish property. A new Commission was then appointed to inquire into the Jewish question.

At the same time Count Ignatieff called a Congress of notable Jews, and asked their advice to devise a remedy against this anti-Jewish agitation. It is said that Count Ignatieff, after a meeting of this Congress, took aside one of the most prominent members, a wealthy Jewish banker, and said to him that he had heard that the sum of one million roubles (£100,000) had been paid to his (Count Ignatieff's) credit in the Jew's bank. The banker, a man of sterling honesty, who could not suspect that the question amounted to a suggestion of a bribe, looked astonished, and replied that it was certainly a mistake, as otherwise the Count would have been advised by the bank. Count Ignatieff remarked that it must, of course, be a mistake, and the matter dropped. When the banker's friends heard the story they pointed out to him his blunder, as the Count's question had been a mere feeler, which he should have understood, and replied, "Why, no

Count, only half a million has been paid to your credit." The wealthy Jews on the Congress would willingly have paid this amount to secure relief from the laws which oppressed all their brethren. It was, however, too late, and on May 3 a *provisional* law was passed by which it was enacted "in order to allay popular excitement against the Jews" that in the future no Jew would be allowed *to go in the country* (I have purposely put the words in italics), only those already settled there before the passing of this "provisional" law being allowed to remain there. Nor in future could Jews purchase property in the country or hold a mortgage on property in the country.

It is said that Count Ignatieff, having resolved to pass this infamous law, let on a long lease an important estate to a Jew, obtaining from him a high price upon warning him that after May he would no longer be able to buy or lease any property—being a Jew.

This law has had far-reaching effects, and landlords as well as Jews greatly suffered from it. The Jews alone possessed ready money, so that, being excluded from the property market, they ceased to bid for the purchase of estates, and ceased to compete against Russians for the lease of farms. Therefore landlords found it most difficult to borrow money on their estates and farmers on their crops. This naturally led to the use of men of straw, and resulted in a serious disturbance of the economic condition

of agricultural Russia. Moreover, it led to a considerable amount of bribery, the police being on the one hand paid by Jews, to show that they were established in the country before May 3, 1882, or the police, on the other hand, threatening to declare that Jews who had entered into leases or purchased properties before that date had in reality done so after the law had been passed—unless some substantial bribe were forthcoming.

Let me give an idea of the consequences of this law. Supposing that a Jew inherits a property in the country while he lives in a town, he is not allowed to visit his property, still less to reside on it. Another point which has often been submitted for decision to the courts is, "What is a town?" • For instance, important ironworks, known as the Novorossisk Company, in the Government of Iekaterinoslav were founded by an Englishman called Hughes, and so important became the place that a township arose close to the works which was named after Mr. Hughes—Ugestopka. It became a town of 20,000 inhabitants, of which 4000 were Jews. One day the police claimed that it was not a *town* but a country *village*, and consequently the Jews, who were prohibited from going to settle in villages after May 3, 1882, were expelled. In another instance a Jew living in a house one mile or so from a village inherited a larger house 1000 yards away. He was prohibited from taking possession of it "because it was not in the same *country* ('campagne')." It will

be seen why I wrote the word country just now in italics. The law does not speak of district or parish but *campagne* (country), and the vagueness of the term enables the police to stretch it as they like for revenge or profit, because the law distinctly states that not only are Jews precluded from going to or settling in the "country," but also from going from one *campagne* (country) to another. Over 10,000 lawsuits have resulted yearly from this iniquitous law, which is still in force. Small concessions have, it is true, been granted lately: the Home Secretary can, for instance, proclaim certain districts and villages to be free from these restrictions. On August 11, 1904, artisans and business men were further allowed to go and settle in the rural districts. This *provisional* law marks an epoch of petty persecutions which began henceforth.

In 1886, as I have previously stated, the number of Jewish children allowed to use the Government schools was restricted to 5 per cent. of the pupils admitted each year in each school, outside the zone, and 10 per cent. inside. Since, however, a university degree means so much to a Jew, conferring upon him the right of unrestricted residence throughout Russia, and since the university can only be entered after completion of the course of eight years in a secondary school, every Jewish boy is kept at school until he has completed his studies there. Other boys are withdrawn two, three, or four years before having gone through the whole

course, and as the restriction of 5 per cent. only applies to the numbers of entrances, the result is that in the upper forms the Jews find themselves often in equal if not superior numbers to the Christians. In order to provide against such an increase the same restrictive numbers have been imposed upon the admissions to the universities, so that if we have sixty scholars leaving the secondary school this year, of whom twenty-five are Jews and thirty-five Christians, and if every one of these Christians goes to the university, only three Jews out of the twenty-five scholars will be admitted to the university. This has also resulted in the bribery of masters to favour Jews at the examinations, and it has also produced a keen spirit of emulation among the Jews themselves, to whom success is a matter of life and death. Consequently most of them work harder than the others, their health suffering considerably in after life. I have been told by the present Minister of Public Instruction, Count Tolstoi, that he proposes to abolish these absurd restrictions.

One of the fresh restrictions imposed upon the Jews in 1892 was most keenly felt by them. Since that year they have been deprived of the franchise for the municipal elections. As a Jew pointed out to me, "All the other rights which were refused to us were but negative; after all we were not allowed to settle in the country after 1863, but those settled there before were not deprived of their property; the number of the boys we could send to

school was limited, but those who were at school were not turned out, while the withdrawal of the franchise *deprived* us of an *acquired* right. And look at the consequences. At Koovna, for instance, 90 per cent. of the landlords are Jews, and yet they cannot sit or be represented on the Municipal Board."

The franchise, however, has been granted to the Jews for the elections to the forthcoming Duma.

Not only the laws themselves imposed great hardships upon them, but also the manner in which these laws are interpreted is the cause of much injustice and perplexity.

Take the case of a Jew who has been for five years a member of the First Guild of tradesmen, and who has thus secured the right of residing where he likes in Russia. He arranges to remove to St. Petersburg to better his position. The question arises whether he can take with him his aged mother, dependent on him, or his children, who are youths of eighteen or nineteen. Can he also take with him his confidential clerk, who is indispensable to carry out his business? The solution of these questions depends entirely upon the good-will of the police authorities. Some most extraordinary cases have been mentioned to me, to which I shall refer later on. Suffice it to say now that many cases have occurred in which artisans were deprived of the right granted to them by law

on the ground that they worked at a different trade from the one which was officially their own.

The result of all this has been that people began to look upon the Jews as outlaws against whom anything could be done with impunity. In order to show how easily the laws can be turned, in 1892, when the Grand Duke Serge became Governor of Moscow, he issued special regulations abolishing the rights which had been granted to the Jewish artizans as well as to the Jews who had served in the army before 1874, in virtue of which they were authorized to reside in whatever part of Russia they might choose. Not only did the Grand Duke forbid Jews belonging to this section of the community to settle in Moscow in the future, but he ordered also all those who were already settled in the town to leave it within six months' time. This measure caused incalculable hardship to the mass of Jews who lived in Moscow at the time, and it resulted, in addition, in considerable loss to the town itself. Many Jewish artizans had opened small factories, which they then transferred to Lodz and Warsaw. There they have prospered rapidly.

The Jews who lacked the necessary means to leave Moscow within the six months fixed by the Grand Duke were imprisoned, and large numbers of others emigrated to America. It was in consequence of this sudden influx of Russian emigrants that Mr. Weber, superintendent of the Emigration Department in the United States, was sent to

Russia with Dr. Kempster of New York to make a report on the subject. This was published in the States, and contains most vivid and sensational accounts of scenes actually witnessed by both Commissioners. Until 1901 the anti-Jewish demonstrations had been confined to the destruction of property, but in that year the first massacres of Jews began at Kichineff, followed by further loss of life during the following year at Homel.

Such are the broad outlines of the history of the Jews in Russia. After 1902 the massacres of Jews became more frequent, and there is strong evidence to show that in many cases these outbursts have been occasionally organized by the police. In most cases the police and other local authorities have taken no steps either to protect the lives and property of the Jews or to punish those who had been guilty in the matter.

It is therefore hardly to be wondered at if the Jews threw themselves body and soul into the ranks of the revolutionaries; having nothing to lose they were naturally prepared to support any movement out of which they might, at least, hope to get some benefit.

Having roughly sketched the past history of the Jews in Russia I shall now come to facts, showing how their persecution has developed within the last few months. I must point out here that the demonstrations organized by the local authorities against the Jews have become so frequent and common that

a special word is used to express the proceedings: it is called "progrom," by which is meant any demonstration against the Jews organized by the administration. I should add that the accounts which I am going to set down have been supplied to me by persons whose position and reputation make them worthy of credit; but at the same time I cannot guarantee the accuracy of facts of which I was not a witness and which I have not been able to control.

CHAPTER XI

THE SINISTER WORD

“PROGROM,” as I have said, is a Russian word signifying a demonstration against the Jews tolerated or organized by the local authorities. I insist that to charge Count Witte with complicity in such ugly work is absurd and unjust. Indeed, whenever the facts have been laid before him, he has encouraged full judicial inquiry. Let us take, for instance, what occurred at Kertch, a town on the Black Sea. There great disturbances took place in July last, during which many of the Jewish shops were destroyed and looted. After much trouble, the influential Jews succeeded in securing a judicial inquiry, in consequence of which the Prosecutor-General of Odessa has presented to the Senate a report showing, among other things, that the officers commanding the local gendarmerie and the police of Kertch were largely responsible for the organization of the disturbances. In fact, the Prosecutor-General advised the Senate to order proceedings to be instituted against these officers. The reason why the Senate was asked to take the initiative in these steps is that no official

can be prosecuted without previous leave from the Senate. It was on July 27 last that the first demonstration was made at Kertch ; this was purely political, without violence, the people parading the streets with red flags. No violent speeches were made, no violence of any kind was suggested by the leaders, who merely advocated the adoption of pacific means to lay before the Tsar and the Government a list of abuses to be remedied. A colonel of gendarmes was subsequently despatched by the governor of the province to inquire into the "disturbances." This enraged the local officers, Sheremetoff, of the gendarmerie, and Ycnoff, who, in their turn, organized a counter demonstration in support of the administration. They distributed, through their police, small national flags to the people, who had been gathered together by a dozen or so of roughs selected by the two officers to whom I have just referred. These officers marched at the head of the procession through the streets of the town. As they passed the shop of a chemist, called Jacobson, Sheremetoff borrowed a large portrait of the Tsar, which was carried through the streets by the demonstrators. As they were passing before a house belonging to a Jew, some one whispered that they ought to destroy the house of "one of those men who were responsible for the disturbances which had taken place." The suggestion spread among the crowd as a flame runs through a train of powder, and the crowd broke into the house. The officer of

gendarmes and chief of police, whose duty it was to protect private property, did not take a single step to prevent the people from looting. They stood watching the operation in the company of a pensioned General, Trouboukoff.

There is a peculiarity in the Russian mind which consists, as I have explained before, in the thoroughness with which men can set themselves to destroy for the sake of destroying. It is, in fact, a sort of lust for destruction, and this the crowd exhibited at Kertch as soon as they had begun their work. Having destroyed the first house belonging to a Jew, they made straight for the nearest one whose owner had committed the great crime in their eyes of being born an Israelite. In vain did the humble master, Sobetzki, endeavour to stop the crowd in their work of demolition, the police, "the military patriots," and the gendarmes resolutely prevented him from interfering. During the whole of that day, until far into the night, similar work went on. Then the exhausted defenders of law and order retired to enjoy a well-deserved rest, after having proved their loyalty to those who personate the noble cause of justice. The next morning they started work once more, regardless of fatigue, and all that day with admirable zeal they went on destroying houses, factories, stores, and all they could lay their hands on which belonged to Jews. It is a remarkable fact that very few things were looted during these days of disorder, as the people

preferred to destroy rather than to loot. In the morning the Municipal Council had met, and a resolution had been passed censuring the officer commanding the police as well as the one commanding the gendarmes; these two were charged with having done nothing to prevent the wholesale destruction of property, and with having permitted the police to take part in acts which it was their special duty to prevent.

It was further decided to send a deputation to the Governor-General of the Province in order to ask him to take energetic measures to prevent a recurrence of the scenes which had just taken place, and to call his special attention to the fact that the police, instead of stopping them, had excited the crowd of hooligans and incited them to destroy Jewish property. The deputation further asked that Captain Sobietzki, Harbour Master, should be entrusted with the care of ensuring order in the town. The Governor replied that "he could not prevent the population from showing their patriotic feelings, and he added that he would certainly take no notice of the stupid grievances of the Municipal Council." Thereupon the Councillors telegraphed to the Prime Minister in St. Petersburg, begging him to take urgent measures. Count Witte immediately wired to the Governor, and, curiously enough, the latter had no need to display any sign of force in order to restore order. The moment the authorities heard that the Prime Minister disapproved of the

disturbances, by some incredible coincidence the agitators and their followers ceased to feel inclined to continue their nefarious work. Although this was probably a mere coincidence, the representative of the Senate who had been sent to report on the subject took a different view, and distinctly charged the officials with complicity with the rioters. The chief witnesses who were heard, and whose testimony proved the part played by the police and their officers were :

First, the Mayor of Kertch ;

Second, the Members of the Municipal Council ;

Third, Local police ;

Fourth, Captain Sobietzki, Harbour Master ;

Fifth, Officers of the Regiment of Artillery quartered in the town ;

Sixth, Mr. Cristi, the principal writer on the local paper.

This last witness handed over to the judge who was conducting the inquiry, the copy of a cypher telegram, the original of which was, he stated, in the hands of a man whom he could not name because this document had been abstracted from the offices of the gendarmerie. It had been impossible, so far, to decipher the whole of the message, but this much had been established, that the wire spoke of "ten to fifteen" people sent to organize a rising which was alluded to under the name of "patriotic manifestations," while the secret agents were called "Tainikin."

The judge who was conducting the inquiry, having received the copy of the stolen message, applied to the Minister of Justice in order that the latter should take steps to recover the original. His decision is said to have gone to General Trepoff, who is reported to have shown much anxiety, requesting the Minister to do his best to show that this message had not been sent from St. Petersburg.

I must take this opportunity to recall what I have said before with regard to my giving certain reports without any guarantee about their accuracy or value. This is the case in the present instance concerning General Trepoff; and I must say that considering the most serious imputation which is conveyed by the hint which I reproduce, I should not have published it if it had stood as a solitary charge laid at his door. But it will be seen that in every case in which some mystery hangs over the question of responsibility in any matter of vital importance, whenever it is impossible to ascertain who is responsible, General Trepoff is invariably chosen and denounced as guilty of the plot. It will therefore be found that in the stories which I shall recount, almost invariably some hint is made at the hidden part played by General Trepoff; but on no occasion have I been able to obtain a single proof of his having been even implicated in the most indirect manner with the matter under discussion. The reader will consequently be forced to come to the conclusion that these charges against General Trepoff must be

taken with caution, and that their constant recurrence materially reduces their credibility.

Several people whom I asked to what cause or causes must be attributed the excitement against the Jews, were unanimous in pointing out that the question was chiefly and almost exclusively one of financial economy. The Jews are hard-working men, they are sober, industrious, invariably save money, and the result is that they thrive under circumstances where the Russian himself is unable to earn a living. The majority of the Russian Jews are small shopkeepers, and act as go-betweens between the highest and lowest classes in Russia. It must be noticed that in Russia there exist only two extremes, great landlords, great manufacturers, great financiers, and alongside of them farm labourers, artisans, navvies, and members of the submerged millions. There is no middle class, so that the Jews occupy the only place in Russian society which stands between the two extremes. Naturally they are much nearer and come into much closer contact with the lower classes than with the upper ones, and their success is the cause of many grievances. There is also the religious question, which plays a small but not unimportant part in the dislike of the people against them. The Russians are most superstitious, and their superstition is encouraged, and too often fanned, by the ignorance of the orthodox priests who have charge of what, to use a common expression, 'I shall call their souls.

These priests receive their education in seminaries, and the majority of them only follow the course of the lower seminary where, outside the rudiments of theology, education is of the lowest standard. They are taught, and fully believe, that Jews are militant enemies of the Orthodox Church, and the Jew is always alluded to by them as an anti-Christ. The belief that the blood of a Christian child is secured by the Jews on Passover Day, and that this human sacrifice is an indispensable adjunct to the Jewish ceremonies of that day, is shared alike by many educated people and the most ignorant peasants. In fact, it was taught not a few months ago in one of the chief high schools for young ladies in the vicinity of St. Petersburg. This is not a mere rumour; it was reported to Count Tolstoi, the distinguished Minister of Education, who immediately issued stringent orders to prevent a repetition of teachings calculated to sow hatred and repulsion in the minds of the Christians against their Jewish compatriots.

CHAPTER XII

THE ALEXANDROVNA PROGROM—I

THE account of the anti-Jewish riots in the previous chapter is taken from an official report which has been drawn up to be submitted to the Senate. I will now describe another progrom which lasted three days, during which numberless houses were destroyed in the town of Alexandrovna. An official inquiry has been conducted by a judicial Commission which reported to the Government Procurer of Kharkoff and to the Procurer of the Court of Ekaterinoslav. I have not seen these reports, and I obtained my information from documents supplied by Jews to one of the most prominent members of the Jewish community for the purpose of obtaining redress for the victims of these outrages. Although every effort has been made to give an impartial account of the case party feeling can be felt here and there, and I have been compelled to add a few remarks to the text which was submitted to me.

The town of Alexandrovna, it should be noted,

had remained quiet during the most acute stage of the revolutionary movement, and, until the Tsar's great Manifesto of October was issued, no disorders had taken place ; the only sign of discontent had been a strike of the local railway employees.

On October 18 (31st of our calendar) the great Manifesto of the previous day had not yet had time to reach the town, and the disturbances which took place cannot, therefore, be connected with it. Although the people had kept quiet the general unrest of other parts of Russia was being felt by the citizens of Alexandrovna, and on October 18 they held a popular meeting ; speeches were made in the most virulent language, one speaker, especially, a M. Bjeby, uttering words against the Jews which excited the people to the utmost pitch, although it would have been impossible to account for the exact cause of such a condition of mind.

The following day the mail boat arrived : among the passengers was a M. Kopol, who landed with a number of suspicious-looking individuals who began at once to go about among the dock labourers exciting them against the Jews, whom they held responsible for all the grievances of the men, suggesting that their property should be looted. One of the clerks of the steamship company telephoned at once to the town, which stands some little distance from the docks, and it was from him that the first news of what was going on, reached Alexandrovna. At once the leading Jews went to the

Mayor and pressed him to take precautionary measures.

He promised to see what could be done, and asked the Jews to meet him at 5 P.M. in the "People's Hall" to discuss the situation.

One of the members of the deputation who had seen the Mayor, Dr. Krantzfeldt, had just returned to his house when the Captain of the Gendarmes, Budagozski, called on him with M. Bjeby, the excitable speaker of the previous day's meeting. The officer asked the doctor what he knew about the program of which everybody spoke as imminent. The doctor having told him what he had himself heard, the officer remarked that the Jews were perfectly right to organize a corps of militia composed of their own men, "because, of course, they must not reckon upon the help of the police or of the soldiers." Fancy an officer, whose special duty it is to protect the life and property of citizens, coolly warning a section of the community that he would do nothing to safeguard them against an imminent attack!

The proposed Jewish militia to which the captain referred had been advocated by an influential Jew, who proposed to lay it before the meeting arranged by the Mayor. It was, however, impossible to hold this meeting because, when the Jews arrived at 5 P.M., they found a great crowd gathered at the "People's Hall," for the distinct purpose of preventing them from holding their meeting. In vain

did the Mayor address the intruders—they would not retire, and the Jews had to fly before a large force of bricklayers who arrived while the Mayor was parleying and who pelted the Jews with a regular shower of stones. When the mail-boat arrived from North Kapol with a number of Jew passengers a crowd of rioters forced their way on board and began to attack the Jews, breaking into their cabins where they had taken refuge; after robbing them they dragged the poor fellows by the feet on to the deck in order to throw them overboard. Nine Jews were seriously wounded, two of whom died later.

When the first news of this outrage reached the town, fifty volunteers, Jews and Christians, armed with revolvers, hastened to the harbour to protect the survivors. They put to flight the band of murderers, but just as the last of the scoundrels had fled, a detachment of Cossacks turned up and fired upon those who had come to the rescue of the victims.* “The Cossacks then picked up the wounded and drove them along to the hospital with repeated blows from their ‘nagaska’” (terrible whip used by the Cossacks). I have quoted from the report submitted to me, and I must remark again

* To be fair, I would suggest that it is quite possible that the soldiers sent to quell the disturbance seeing a band of armed men, some holding revolvers still smoking in their hand, may have mistaken them for the rioters. Note that it is not alleged that the Cossacks exchanged words with them; they saw men firing shots and were quite justified in mistaking them for rioters caught in the act.

that these men could not have been so badly wounded as to require "picking up" because in that case they could not have been "driven with whips" to the hospital. Such statements vitiate the evidence.

Meanwhile the local authorities—the Captain of Gendarmes, the Police Superintendent, and Juge d'Instruction—had met at Government House, where they had collected all the available troops, 280 infantry and half a sotnia (sixty) Cossacks. It is alleged that these men were kept inactive in the courtyard of the place instead of patrolling the streets, so that the inhabitants themselves had to patrol the town to prevent further disorders.

The next morning, however, the crowd gathered under some improvised leaders and started to sack and loot the shops and houses belonging to Jews. The police did not even attempt to stop the ruffians, while the Cossacks witnessed what was going on and only began to display activity for the purpose of preventing the Jews from defending their property. The looting and wrecking of houses was the work of hooligans led by local tradesmen (*see* what I have said of the causes of the anti-Jewish movement). This shows how trade jealousy stands prominent among the various motives which lead to attacks upon the Jews.

Whenever a number of Jews collected together to oppose their assailants they were dispersed by the Cossacks, who forced a breach through their ranks

to enable the ruffians following them to carry on their infamous work. Some Jews who appeared determined to defend their property at all costs were seized by the Cossacks, bound, and tied to two mounted troopers. They were then made to run between their captors, who started their horses at a canter. Five Jews were killed that day and many wounded; there was no casualty on the rioters' side, a fact which goes far to prove the statements of the victims.

One incident, proved by the testimony of five respectable householders whose names have been given, shows the part played by the Cossacks. At 9 A.M. these gentlemen were passing the house of a certain Lyarsinski—a large three-storied building. The officer commanding a detachment of Cossacks addressed them and then said that 600 "defenders of the Jews" were collected in the house from which his men had been fired upon. "Unless all the weapons in the hands of these people," he added, "are at once surrendered I mean to destroy the house." The gentlemen to whom he had spoken suggested that he should search the place, a course to which the officer agreed, and having ordered his men to fix bayonets he stepped into the house, accompanied by three of the previous witnesses. A thorough search was made, but beyond the tenants, of whom women and children formed the largest number, nobody was found. The women implored the officer to protect them, and he

promised to do so, leaving two Cossacks to prevent hooligans from entering the place. The troopers, however, followed their comrades as soon as the officer had disappeared. (This, of course, shows bad discipline, but I do not see how the officer can be held responsible.) It appears, however, that shortly after he had concluded his search the same officer said to a captain whom he met with a detachment of infantry: "Do not pass near Lyarsinski's house, it is full of the Jewish militia and they might throw a bomb at you." The words were spoken in the hearing of a number of credible witnesses whose names are known.

Disorders were renewed the next day, the house of a Christian being sacked, this being the only non-Jewish property which suffered during these riots. Lyarsinski's house was next looted, and while this went on two sotnias of Cossacks were drawn up in double file opposite the house. By command of their officers they began to fire volleys upon this house and others near it, following the directions given by the looters, who pointed out these houses as having harboured people who had fired shots from the windows. This resulted in two male servants being killed and one woman wounded. The sacking of Lyarsinski's house was then renewed, the Cossacks leaving the ruffians with whom they had chummed and shouting to them, "Now for our dinner!"

A wine shop occupied part of this unfortunate

building, and while the rioters were looting it a police superintendent made his way inside it and soon came out with a box full of revolvers and cartridges, which he exhibited to the crowd in the street. The revolvers were of the old pin-fire pattern and the cartridges belonged to an obsolete weapon. "It is impossible to say," remarks the report, "how these came to be in the shop." Nevertheless, it is not suggested that the police superintendent took them in, and the coincidence is rather unfortunate. It does not excuse the looting, or the part played by the Cossacks, and I should have omitted the incident but for its typical peculiarity. It indicates what I have tried to convey of the Russian turn of mind; no Russian will admit that his side may be wrong; his opponents are always wholly to blame.

Another typical detail, quite Gilbertian: the house stood at the angle of two streets, and while the looting was going on, the Deputy of the Ispravnik (a kind of police magistrate) was looking on, seated on a chair; in the other street the Captain of Gendarmes, Boudagozski, watched the proceedings on another chair on the opposite pavement. Around them stood quite a number of officials following, as usual, the example set before them.

Among other incidents which came to the knowledge of the Judicial Commission are the following: while the progrom was in progress the Ispravnik Vivulowski and the Juge d'Instruction were driving through a street where looting was going on, and

after looking at the "show" they quietly drove away without interfering. Of course, the mob regarded such a proceeding as a tacit approbation, and cheerfully continued their nefarious work. Yet a single word from those awe-inspiring arbiters of the fate of men would have stopped the progrom in that particular district at least. For instance, another judge, Pogendpot, seeing hooligans looting a house, threatened to have them before him in court if they did not desist, and at once they fled. On the other hand, the Kinski Natchalnick (local stipendiary, but with powers restricted to cases of the smallest importance) was endeavouring to restrain a mob from looting a house. The Juge d'Instruction then drove through the street and cried, "Come on, Ivan Ivanowitch, get into my carriage and leave those fellows alone. You will only end by being beaten like the others; come, don't bother." This, of course, was equivalent to an order, and the reluctant magistrate joined his chief. The mob, naturally, understood the judge's words to imply that the law would not punish them for their doings, and that Jews were creatures with whom any one could play at will without fear of retribution.

Alongside of the tragedy which this report describes there is an extraordinary lack of a sense of humour in those who drew up the document. Fancy a mob sacking, looting, and destroying property to the value of many scores of thousands,

bringing men and their families to the verge of starvation and others to a premature grave, and, while this goes on, imagine high officials sitting on chairs in the street to watch the performance comfortably, while judges of a more inquisitive turn of mind drive about the streets to get a full view of the various incidents of the day and to make comparisons between the manner in which one company interpreted the drama which they were acting and the way in which another company rendered the same play! It reminds one of the playgoers who used to compare Mr. Beerbohm Tree's d'Artagnan with Mr. Lewis Waller's, only the Russian judges evidently have the gift (probably from long practice) of looking unconcerned upon human suffering, injustice and death. After all, one can understand such callousness in men (if Russian judges of this kind can be called men) who are conscious of having done much worse themselves by prostituting the justice which they are supposed to administer. This, of course, does not imply that all Russians are tarred with the same brush. Read the charming story of Count Witte's noble kindness and you will see that a good Russian is as fine a man as any nation has produced.

CHAPTER XIII

THE ALEXANDROVNA PROGRAM—II

THE incidents which I have described at the end of the previous chapter did not conclude the Alexandrovna program. The fury of the mob was not exhausted after the excesses which they had committed that day.

When night came the crowd dispersed for a while, but although the district in which the program had been carried out was surrounded by troops, shops and houses continued to be looted and set on fire during the whole of the night.

In the evening the Mayor, urged by the people, had telegraphed to the General commanding the district of Ekaterinoslav to beg him to take immediate action as the town was on fire and the local authorities were doing nothing to protect private property. Evidently this message was taken into serious consideration, as the following day, when the rioters after a brief lull tried to resume the program, they were met by the troops and received a salutary volley. Those who were

unhurt rushed away as fast as their legs could carry them, and no further attempt was made to renew the attacks upon the Jews.

There is now further proof of the support which the rioters secured from the local authorities.

When the progrom began, a party of the inhabitants, Christians and Jews, rescued that day from the looters a portion of the goods which they had stolen. These goods were stored in the courtyard of the Town Hall, in the "People's Hall," and in the school room of the Sebastapol railway. The latter building, standing outside the town, had been filled up with more than thirty cartloads of goods taken from the looters, and the local authorities had provided a detachment of Cossacks to guard the property stored there.

The following morning, however, all the goods had disappeared, and the Juge d'Instruction posted up placards inviting the people to give information as to where these stolen goods had been taken. I may here remark that all this seems to indicate a most incredible state of affairs. Here are officials who place a force of Cossacks to guard property; this property, representing a quantity sufficient to fill thirty carts, disappears during the night, and nothing seems to have been done to force the soldiers, in whose charge it was, to account for its disappearance. The judge contents himself with advertising for information which might lead to the discovery of the stolen goods; it therefore seems that Govern-

ment should either disprove the statement or prosecute those responsible.

Subsequently the local authorities, *i.e.*, the Ispravnik, the Captain of Gendarmes, and the local judge declared that it was not advisable to search for the missing articles, as such a step might cause a renewal of the program. When, however, superior orders compelled them to make inquiries, the manner in which the search was carried out shows that they were determined that it should give no result. Only places were visited where it was certain that the goods could not possibly be found ; for instance, among the houses which were officially searched on the pretext of looking for the missing property, were the premises of the Azoff Bank. The house of the Ispravnik might as well have been searched ; but perhaps this would have led to startling results.

Three days after the end of the program a meeting was held at the Town Hall, with the Ispravnik in the chair, all the Cossack officers, the Captain of the Gendarmes, and all the other officials being present, as well as a large number of citizens. A municipal councillor, M. Tepikine, addressed the meeting, and declared that the Jews, being likely to attack the Russian houses in revenge for the program, it was advisable to raise a militia to protect the Russians and their property. This proposal met with general approval, and the next day a secret meeting was held by several municipal councillors, with the Deputy of the Ispravnik, as chairman,

to arrange all matters connected with the proposed militia.

Hearing of this, the Jews, fearing that it might cause a renewal of the progrom, asked that steps should be taken to protect them from the danger; the Ispravnik, to whom they had addressed their request, replied that he could not promise to prevent a fresh progrom, as he had not the disposal of a sufficient number of soldiers. He declared that at least a battalion (1000 men) would be required to cope with the rioters; unfortunately, he said, no additional troops could be obtained from Ekaterinoslav, as all the available men were needed to cope with the risings all over the district, so that he was helpless and only hoped that the progrom would not start again.

A Cossack officer, who was present when the matter was discussed, remarked that if the Jews had not fired upon the Cossacks there would have been no progrom and that the Jews must expect another one if they fired again upon his men. Yet it must be noted, that during the whole time which the Cossacks spent at Alexandrovna not a single one of them was wounded, even while the progrom was going on, so that the officer's remarks were utterly unjustified.

A committee of Jewish lawyers and notables assisted by Christian sympathisers, was then formed, and an office opened with the object of supplying free judicial assistance to the victims of the progrom,

and also for the purpose of making a full and searching inquiry into the origin of the movement; the committee intended also to ascertain the responsibility of the various officials. This greatly incensed the police and the gendarmerie; the Juge d'Instruction looked upon the action of the committee as a direct slight, as he had himself received orders to make an official inquiry into the program.

The judge issued a proclamation, which was posted up all over the town, inviting whoever might be able to do so to supply information upon certain questions which were enumerated in the placards. The very nature of these questions showed the line which the judge meant to follow in his inquiry, and the committee of lawyers at once wrote to the Procureur of the Court of Kharkoff to call his attention to the subject and to expose the methods followed by the judge.

Soon after this letter had been sent, large numbers of handbills were distributed all over the town urging the people to massacre the Jews. Some of these bills even mentioned by name several notable Jews and some of their Christian sympathisers, who were represented as specially deserving to be put out of the way; the Christians who were mentioned in this document all belonged to the committee of which I have just spoken. All these handbills were printed with a mimeograph (a duplicating machine). Considering that there were only two of these instruments in the town, one in the office

of the police and the other at the Town Hall, it is evident that the handbills were printed in one of these two places.

The Captain of the Gendarmes, Budagozski, the Juge d'Instruction, Maidachavski, the Ispravnik, Vivuloski, the Municipal Councillor, Tepikine, and a wealthy landlord called Nepomniatschi were commonly designated by most people in the town as the authors or instigators of these handbills, which, it was said, had been drawn up in the house of a tradesman named Bitschoff. The people were terrified by these bills, especially those whose names were mentioned; they took steps, therefore, to bring the matter before the authorities, and in order to do so, with the full knowledge of all the inhabitants, they asked for leave to hold a meeting at the Town Hall. Their request was granted, and at the meeting the Municipal Councillor, Tepikine, declared openly that he and his friends fully approved of all that was said in the handbills. This opinion was endorsed by Captain Budagoski, who declared that he looked upon the program as a "commendable demonstration of loyalty to the Emperor."

Several of the persons before whom these words were uttered indignantly protested against them, and insisted upon their withdrawal, the meeting being brought to a close in confusion. Things soon assumed a still more serious complexion, the town and the surrounding villages were flooded with fresh handbills urging the massacre of the Jews, and on

December 4 the inhabitants of all the villages in the neighbourhood of the town received other bills calling upon them to come on the 6th in a body to the town, where, "under the protection of the sacred images and of the Emperor's portrait," they would join the local citizens in the work of exterminating the Jews.

This illustrates once more what I have said already concerning the manner in which the Emperor's name has been used by agitators to urge the people to rise. There is no other country in the world, and there has never been, I think, another instance in history, where the name of a sovereign has been used to foment a revolution, and when loyalty to their ruler has been invoked by agitators and accepted blindly by the crowd as an incentive to insurrection. As a rule, revolutions begin with curses levelled against the head of the State, but it is true that—as I have said—there has not been, and never will be, a revolution in Russia, at least for some years to come. The Nihilist and other fanatics who seek to take the Emperor's life would be lynched by the mob if they were suspected of such designs.

But to return to the program. The handbills circulated with the object of causing a fresh rising on December 6 were collected and taken to the Governor of Ekaterinoslav by a special deputation of notable citizens. The Governor paid careful attention to the matter, and promised to take steps

to prevent the intended rising. He handed over to the deputation a written message to the Ispravnisk ordering him to prevent the intended manifestation, and holding him responsible for it if it took place. Although this official had previously asserted that he would require at least 1000 soldiers to be able to prevent the mob from attacking the Jews, he experienced no difficulty in preventing the manifestation! December 6 passed off without disorder, the Jews were not molested in any way, and it is significant to note that it was not necessary to use either the police or the soldiers to prevent the rising. The order issued by the Governor was sufficient to bring the manifestation and the progrom to a sudden end. We are bound to remark that this seems to justify the Jews' contention that the officials have been responsible for the outrages committed against them; we cannot find any excuse for the officials whom they accuse, not only of having failed to protect them and their property, but also of having instigated and organized the anti-Jewish outrages.

The report from which I have taken this account quotes the names of the individuals who took the most active part in the riots; among others several of the chief officials, the Ispravnisk Vivuloski, the Captain of Gendarmes Budagozski, and the Juge d'Instruction Maidachewski, are accused of complicity in the movement. It is to be noted that many of the rioters were armed with

revolvers and rifles belonging to Government, and we are bound to ask ourselves how they came to have these weapons. They were firing in the public thoroughfares, insulting the Jews in the streets, in the restaurants and other public places, and openly urging people to start the program: all this was going on before the program actually began, in the presence of the police, no check or hindrance being attempted and no punishment being inflicted upon a single one of these disorderly characters. The present account, compared with the account of the program at Kertch, shows this striking peculiarity, that in both cases the methods of the rioters were the same and the attitude of the chief officials identical; in fact, the part played by the local authorities compels one to conclude—if not that the officials organized the movement, at least that they made no attempt to check it, and gave their support to the rioters. To suspect Government as a body or even individual Ministers of complicity with the local officials is impossible and absurd; the Home Secretary has, however, a serious charge to answer for having left unpunished those officials who, while responsible for the protection of the citizens and their property, yet allowed the rioters to sack, loot, burn houses, and even kill their owners. It would have been sufficient to inflict an exemplary punishment upon one or two of these guilty officials to prevent others from following their example: impunity only emboldens others, and there is no

doubt that the prosecution of officials would have put an end to these outrageous proceedings.

As will have been seen in this account of the wrongs from which the Jews have had to suffer so cruelly, there is no doubt that to tolerate any longer the persecution of a body of nearly 5,000,000 of citizens is unworthy of a civilized nation. Abominable as may have been the outrages committed against them by the mob, guilty as the local officials may have been in failing to protect them, or even in having organized the destruction of their property and in having incited the people to murder them, all this—even admitting the latter accusation to be true—is nothing, I think, to the systematic manner in which laws have been passed and every effort deliberately made to deprive the Jews of the rights—however small these may be—which other Russians have been allowed to enjoy.

Outrages can be excused as an outburst of popular feeling, but cool, deliberate persecution which affects 5,000,000 of men seems incredible in the twentieth century.

CHAPTER XIV

WHAT M. KARALENKO SAYS

I HAVE on many previous occasions insisted upon the extraordinary lack of practical ideas exhibited on all political questions by men who may be looked upon as representing the most cultured section of the Russian community. I cannot illustrate better my meaning than by reproducing a conversation which I had with M. Karalenko, one of the best-known writers in Russia, where his name is almost as popular as Maxim Gorky's. The distinguished novelist is no politician, but he has been led to raise his voice to protest, with all the weight which his name carries, against the treatment inflicted upon villagers in the Government of Poltava, where he usually resides.

"You ask me," he said when I was introduced to him, "to express my opinion on what is going on in Russia at present. 'I cannot do better than give you an account of the manner in which the administration has been treating people whom I know personally, and who cannot certainly be termed revolutionaries.

“Take, for instance, the disgraceful scenes which have lately taken place in the Government of Poltava. The peasants of the villages of Sorotchinsi and Utsivitza decided to close the warehouses where spirits are sold by the agents of Government, who have the monopoly of the sale of intoxicants. This step was prompted by the desire to prevent disturbances which might be occasioned through the too free consumption of liquors at a time when the people were already excited. A few villagers went to the store, turned the officials out, and padlocked the doors. There was no destruction of property and no violence was used. The chief of the village police, however, arrested the leaders of this demonstration and sent them to prison. They had acted illegally and certainly deserved to be punished; but days elapsed and yet they were not brought before any court of justice. Thereupon their friends went to the police and insisted upon their being tried or released on bail. These representations were of no avail, and in order to put pressure on the administration the friends of the imprisoned men seized the chief of the village police and his assistant and confined them under guard in a house. Hearing of this outrage the district police officer came to Sorotchinsi with 100 Cossacks, and after a long parley with the villagers he obtained the release of his subordinates upon promising that he would do his best to expedite the trial of the imprisoned men. He then retired with his Cossacks and the peasants

gathered together to discuss the situation. Suddenly the Cossacks were seen returning to the village, and a collision ensued between the soldiers and the peasants.* The district chief of police was wounded

* It must be noted that this part of the story is rather vague, and in vain I tried to get M. Karalenko to explain how the disturbance began. He asserted that the Cossacks *must* have fired the first shot; but this does not account for the fact that the villagers were armed and made use of their weapons. I do not for a minute suggest that M. Karalenko tried to alter the facts so as to incriminate the administration, but I call attention to this point, because I have invariably found that Russians have no conception of the rules of evidence, and are satisfied with mentioning facts without considering the circumstances which have led to them. Exactly the same thing occurred on another occasion when a man of good position, incapable of telling an untruth, told me how a high police official in Moscow had been to the house of a well-known doctor and had asked him whether he possessed a revolver.

"Yes," replied the doctor.

"Have you got a licence?" asked the official.

"Yes."

"Will you show it to me?"

The doctor went to his desk, and as he was about to pick up the licence the police official shot him dead.

The man who told me this story grew most' indignant when I told him that I did not believe it.

"So you think that I am lying?" he said.

"No," I answered; "but I shall never believe that the incident took place as you describe it." There must have been a quarrel, words exchanged, or something which led up to the shooting of the doctor."

"No," said my friend; "you see you do not know Russia, and you cannot understand what goes on here."

and eight peasants were killed. Those who had escaped and were flying from the Cossacks found

“ I do not care what you say ; I may not know Russia, but I know human nature. Even an animal does not jump on a man and kill him without motive. A lion will not come to kill a man half a mile away if he is not hungry, or has been not disturbed, or is not wounded and wants revenge. No man will go to another man's house and ask him to show a licence and shoot him dead in the way you describe. Did they have a previous quarrel or some cause of enmity ? ”

“ No, nothing, I assure you ; there was no excuse for the police official who shot the doctor in cool blood as I have told you, and if you do not believe me ask M. N——. Isn't it so ? ” he then asked M. N. who was present when this conversation took place.

“ Certainly,” replied M. N——.

Determined to find out the true facts of the case I made inquiries, and finally I found that the circumstances were the following :

While fighting was going on between the insurgents and the troops at Moscow Dr. X——. picked up wounded insurgents and took them to his house, where he dressed their wounds. Some only slightly wounded left the house and went on fighting. At last a high police officer came to the doctor as he was carrying a wounded insurgent in his house and told him that he was not to attend to those men.

“ I am a physician,” replied the doctor. “ I know no politics, and it is my duty to attend to those who suffer : I shall, therefore, go on nursing all those who need my help.”

The police officer threatened to arrest the doctor, who replied that he had better not threaten him because he would soon have him out of the house.

“ You have fire-arms, I suppose ? ” asked the officer.

“ I have,” answered the doctor.

“ And have you got a licence ? ”

“ I'll soon show you my licence,” replied the doctor in a high

themselves confronted by another troop, who again fired at them, twenty more of the peasants being killed by this second volley. The condition of the wounded police officer was too grave to permit his removal, and he was, therefore, left in the village, where he subsequently died; thereupon a high official, a member of the Governor's Council, M. Filonoff, was sent by the Governor to claim the body of the officer, and to make an inquiry into the circumstances which had led to the affray.

M. Filanoff came to the village with an escort of 100 Cossacks, whom he sent all over the

state of excitement, and so saying he rushed to a drawer and opened it. A revolver lay on the top of some papers and the doctor seized it, evidently with the object of taking the licence which lay under it, but the police officer, who had been fighting for many hours against overwhelming odds, and who had seen the movement of the doctor, thought that the latter was going to shoot him. He therefore fired at him and dropped him dead.

No doubt this does not excuse the deed, but it explains it. When I mentioned these facts to the man who had first told me the story, he replied that he did not see the importance of those details, as the fact remained that a harmless man who was looking after wounded people had been shot. I was unable to convince him or even to make him understand that his version was not in accord with the real circumstances of the occurrence, and that presented, as he had done it, the story was inadmissible. I have told this in order to explain how the incidents described by M. Karalenko are presented in a light which is unsatisfactory to our British conception of evidence, but it must not be concluded that this was done with any intention of distorting the truth.

place to drive the people out of their houses. They were collected in the main square of the village under the threat that every house would be destroyed if any one of them failed to appear. As soon as the villagers had gathered together, they were surrounded by Cossacks with drawn swords and two pieces of artillery were trained on them. M. Filonoff then ordered every villager to kneel down, placing the Jews on one side of the square and the Christians on the other. For two solid hours the unfortunate creatures were kept on their knees, and at the end of that time their tormentor, having noticed two of them who were wearing the insignia of the Knights of St. George, ordered the bearers of the badge of bravery to rise and to go home. Their decoration gave them immunity from the degradation inflicted upon the others, who were kept for two and a half hours longer kneeling in the snow. After this torture had lasted four and a half hours, M. Filonoff, to whom a list of all the villagers had been given, called out each man individually, and as each came near him the brutal representative of the Tsar rained blows on his face, and then ordered some of the Cossacks to seize the fellow and to give him a further hiding. Twenty men were treated in this barbarous fashion. (M. Karalenko has a list of their names, and has seen on their faces the marks of the blows and on their bodies the bruises left by the whips of the fierce soldiers.)

With blood streaming down their faces the unfortunate villagers were then led to jail, but they were not kept there for more than about half an hour. The bloodthirsty Filonoff sent Cossacks to drag them out, with orders to renew the whipping to which they had already been subjected but a moment before. One student, Romanoffski by name, had been left in his cell and spared this fresh indignity in consequence of his superior education. The Cossacks, however, went to their chief and asked why this man should be spared. M. Filonoff, after hearing the soldiers' complaint, replied that the Cossacks were right, and that it was only just that the student should be treated like his companions; "for," he remarked, "since all men are now equal before the law, it is not right that an exception should be made in this case." Accordingly the Tsar's representative enforced the "impartial administration of the law." *

But this was not the end of the tortures which were to be inflicted upon these victims. When all of them had been whipped anew they were formed into a procession and marched several miles to the village of Utsivitza, the inhabitants of which had also been guilty of closing the spirit warehouse. As soon as he reached the village with his gruesome

* Here again it is only fair to remark that, abominable as such cases may be, one must not forget that French, German, and Belgian officials have been guilty of acts equally, if not more, revolting in the Colonies.

followers M. Filonoff sent for the Starotsa, head of the village notables, a kind of mayor of the place. The moment he appeared Filonoff struck him heavily across the face and tore down the badge of office which he was wearing, after which the infamous Filonoff turned his attention to the Starotsa's deputy, whom he struck down with a heavy counting machine* which stood at hand on a table. He then ordered the inhabitants of the village to kneel down in the snow, after which they were in their turn beaten and whipped by the Cossacks, who dragged them bleeding and bedraggled over the snow.

“This,” concluded M. Karalenko, “was not the last of the indignities to which the unfortunate peasants were subjected ; many of them complained to me when I conducted my inquiry into the acts of the loathsome Filonoff that the soldiers had inflicted still worse indignities upon the wives and daughters of some of them, although I must add that I was unable to obtain undeniable proof of the truth of this statement.” •

When this abominable outrage was reported to the responsible authorities they refused to take any steps either to punish M. Filonoff or even to suspend him until a full inquiry had been made. M. Karalenko published these facts in a local paper which he edits, and he asked that the Government

* This machine is an importation from China, and consists of heavy wooden balls running on iron rods. •

should prosecute him and punish him if he was unable to prove the absolute accuracy of the charges which he was bringing against the villain Filonoff. But nothing was done ; M. Karalenko was not prosecuted and Filonoff the scoundrel was not even suspended, but continued to be employed " to restore order " in other villages of the province of Poltava. This so inflamed the anger of his victims that, unable to get either redress or even the promise that steps would be taken to open an inquiry, they finally took matters into their own hands, and Filonoff fell under the pistol of an unknown avenger who shot him dead a few days later in the open street.

" Now," said M. Karalenko, when he had concluded his account, " what do you think of such methods? What have you to say in defence of an administration who tolerates such abominations? "

" Of course," I replied, " all you have told me is very disgraceful, but at the same time it strikes me that if the people knew the methods employed by the administration, they did with open eyes all they could to bring upon themselves the treatment to which they have been subjected. And," I added, " are you certain of the accuracy of all the facts which you have just exposed? "

" I have not mentioned a single incident which has not been confirmed to me by independent and unimpeachable testimony. I have seen the victims, and I have touched the marks of the blows inflicted

upon them. In fact, I have rejected every statement which was not fully confirmed, and upon which I could entertain the least doubt. What I have described is but one among hundreds of similar incidents which are of daily occurrence all over Russia."

"But," I said, "do you not think that the promises which have been made by the Tsar's Manifesto of October last offer a guarantee that this kind of thing will soon be stopped and become impossible?"

"The Tsar's Manifesto," replied M. Karalenko with a smile; "but it is nothing but an empty document, as we have no guarantee of the fulfilment of the promises which it contains."

"What do you mean by guarantee?"

"Well, I mean that after the Manifesto was issued provisional laws should have been made to ensure the carrying out of the various promises which were made."

"I do not follow you," I remarked. "You want a Constitutional Government, and at the same time you are asking for laws to deal with questions which really belong to the competence of the Duma, the National Assembly, which is to manage the affairs of the country."

"The Duma! First of all we do not know when it will meet, and in the meantime our people remain at the mercy of an unscrupulous administration. You do not, you cannot, understand the terrible

state of Russia. In England you have the habeas corpus ; in England no man can be arrested and kept in jail without trial ; but here, not only is a man's liberty at the mercy of any petty official, but also under the extraordinary powers which have been conferred upon the provincial governors any man can be shot or hanged by simple administrative order, without even the semblance of a trial, and without inquiry into his case. You cannot imagine the number of people who lose their lives in this way every week, every day I could even say."

"Certainly," I answered, "all that is bad enough ; but don't you think that the revolutionaries are themselves responsible for this state of affairs ? When the general strike was proclaimed, and for several days Government found itself isolated and cut off from all communication with the provinces, the Cabinet had to provide for a continuation of the working of the administration in the absence of orders which could not be transmitted by the Cabinet."

"This," replied M. Karalenko, "does not in the least justify the continuation of a state of things which may have been necessary at the time but which has now ceased to be so. We do not ask that those who break the law should not be punished, but we ask that they should be tried before a properly constituted tribunal instead of finding themselves at the mercy of every petty official. In fact, the first thing which should have been done after the

issue of the Tsar's Manifesto was to make a clean sweep of the old administration."

I tried to point out that an administration, especially in a country of such vast proportions as Russia, cannot be changed and replaced by officials improvised at a moment's notice. I pointed out that in matters of government the smallest change involves alterations which extend over the whole system. I also remarked that since M. Karalenko was quoting England, he must not lose sight of the fact that it has taken us centuries to reach our present condition of political and individual liberty, and that Russia cannot, therefore, expect to be suddenly transformed from a state similar to the one which obtained in Great Britain hundreds of years ago into a condition as advanced as the one which we have reached after centuries of gradual progress.

"I admit all that," said the novelist; "but you mustn't forget that we are now in the twentieth century, and, to make a comparison, if I want to light a new town it would be absurd to use tallow candles at first and then to replace them by lamps and then employ gas until I shall finally make use of electric light. Electric light can be generated, and it is only natural that I should use it at once."

"Your illustration," I said, "enables me to give you an answer which will tally with it. Before you use electric light you must obtain leave from the people to pass wires over their houses or

under the ground which belongs to them. And even supposing that you should obtain this leave, you have further to consider whether there is not a company which has already secured the privilege of lighting up the town and the people with gas; if so the rights of the company will have to be considered and you cannot encroach upon them."

"When you want to come to progress," remarked M. Karalenko, "you cannot consider individuals, the good of the public must come before any other consideration, and individuals do not count."

This, of course, made all further discussion impossible, and it confirmed me in the view, which other similar discussions have impressed upon my mind, that it is hopeless for the Russian Government to reckon upon the help of men imbued with the best of intentions but lacking all conception of the methods by which a country can be governed. Their influence can only increase the difficulty of those who endeavour to carry out the reforms of which Russia is in such need.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE MAN OF THE MOMENT:

COUNT WITTE

THE MAN

PUBLIC opinion in Russia is most divided about Count Witte. Some represent him as a man without conscience, a hypocrite, only anxious to remain in power in order to enrich himself.

Others, on the contrary, look upon him as a great man, who will become greater still and will rise to the level of Beaconsfield, Rhodes, Bismarck, Cavour, Gambetta, and others whose names will remain immortal in the history of nations.

The latter are unfortunately too few, and the Liberals of all shades who ought to support him do not seem to realize that their constant attacks are making the game of the reactionaries, and of the Socialists.

I had heard a great deal in favour and as much against Count Witte, and I did not know what to think of him when he did me the honour of receiving

me. When, however, I had been, during more than one hour under the spell of his conversation, I was bound to acknowledge that the Russian Premier possessed that magnetic influence which is the characteristic of all men who have become great leaders of nations.

At that time, however, I only knew Count Witte the statesman, while now I know the *man*, and I understand why he has, to such an extent, the power of attracting and of fascinating those who come in contact with him.

Well known as the great Russian statesman is throughout the world, his private life seems to have remained a mystery to every one, and it ought to be interesting to learn something of it.

The story which I am going to relate has been told to me by one of Count Witte's opponents and therefore it has not been prompted by hero-worship, and it explains why the great statesman possesses that gift of attracting those who meet him—because he possesses the greatest of God's gifts, a great and noble heart.

Some time ago a petty Russian journalist founded one of the numerous radical rags which have but an ephemeral existence, and as his paper was not selling he tried to create a sensation by publishing a virulent attack against the Premier and his policy.

Since the Censure has been abolished a special department has been created for the purpose of putting a check upon the newspapers which exceed

the bounds of fair comment. When this article came before the eyes of the official in charge of this service, he at once sent for the writer and ordered him to be sent to jail. In vain did the poor fellow plead for mercy ; in vain did he implore the official to give him a day's grace in order to enable him to collect sufficient money for his rent, due the following day, explaining that if he failed to pay it his wife would be turned out to starve in the cold. His prayers were in vain, and he was taken to prison. As soon as he had been removed to a cell he asked for some writing materials, which were brought to him, but he was warned that his letter would be read by the governor of the jail and would only be despatched if it contained nothing objectionable.

When he had finished writing he handed over the letter to the governor, who was dumbfounded to read :

“ MY DEAR COMRADE,—So now you are the greatest man in the Empire while I am the smallest among its citizens—you Prime Minister, I a prisoner, yet I am writing to you and I think that I have the right to address you as I have done, notwithstanding the gulf which separates our respective positions, one who was sitting for eight long years alongside me at school. We were great chums then, and I cannot help thinking that you must have remained the good fellow which you were then. . . .

“ You are all powerful now—I am powerless : your word is a command—prayers are all I can utter. Listen to me : unless I have fifty roubles (£5) to send to my wife to-morrow, she will be turned out of doors to freeze and starve in the streets, as she will be unable to pay our rent. Will you send the money to her? I am in jail because I have abused you, yet you are the only one in this world who can help me, and somehow I feel sure that you will do so.

“ Do not forsake me,
“ Your unfortunate old school chum,
“ ——— ”

“ For whom is this letter meant? ” asked the governor, “ certainly not for his Excellency, Count Witte ? ”

“ Yes, it is for him. ”

The governor found himself in a fix. On the one hand, if he sent the letter, the Premier might deem it an impertinence and dismiss him for having dared to address to him such an epistle from a common prisoner sent to jail precisely because he had insulted the Minister. On the other hand, supposing that he stopped the letter and that the man's wife died, and that, subsequently, the prisoner should find means to get the story of this letter to reach the Premier's ears, the latter might be doubly angry because it would have become too late to mend matters. So, after due consideration of both sides of the question, the governor decided to take the

risk and he despatched the letter to Count Witte by a messenger.

The man brought back a reply which was addressed to the prisoner. The envelope was superscribed in the Minister's own handwriting and bore his official stamp, and it was therefore delivered untouched.

The journalist broke open the seal and read :

“MY DEAR COMRADE,—So sorry to hear of your trouble ; cheer up, everything will be all right ; your wife will have her fifty roubles. Some dinner will also be brought to you, eat it cheerfully, your wife will be eating the same as yourself.

“Your old comrade,

As soon as he had despatched this letter Count Witte sent for the official who had had the journalist arrested.

“Look here, Mr. X.,” asked the Count, “why has Mr. A. been arrested ?”

“Your Excellency, the man wrote a most abominable article in which he grossly, insulted your Excellency.”

“Well, he happens to be a friend of mine . . .”

“I hope that your Excellency will forgive me.

* I have used a formula to begin the letters which is wrong, because I did not know the Christian names of the writers. As a rule Russians address each other by their Christian name, and the one of their father “Dear Nikolas Alexandrowitch.”

Had I known . . . but I shall order his immediate release."

"No," replied the Premier, who always shows the utmost consideration for the feelings of his subordinates, "no, you need not do so. I feel sure that you did what was right."

"But if your Excellency will only tell me to do so I shall release him at once . . ."

"No," once more, said the Premier. "I do not mean to interfere with you; you are entrusted with the administration of the law which concerns the press, and I neither can nor will interfere with your decisions; only I should like to see the article."

At first the official demurred, declaring that he could not allow the Count to read such abominable slanders, but at last he obeyed his Chief's orders.

When Count Witte had read the article he handed the paper over to the official, and, smiling, he remarked to him:

"Yes, it is a little stiff, only . . . don't you think that you could release the writer, say, tomorrow? It will have been a quite sufficient punishment for his offence."

Needless to say that the official fully agreed with the Premier, and the following day the journalist found himself free.

He rushed home and was startled when his wife received him smiling.

"So you have done your business, my dear," she said. "It was really lucky that you managed to get

those 200 roubles (£20) paid to you in advance; they came quite handy."

The husband looked at her in blank amazement.

"And it was most kind of your friend," added his wife, "to have brought me the money and to have taken the trouble to come and warn me that you would not be able to return till to-day. I should have felt so anxious."

"And you thanked him?" asked her husband in a voice choked by emotion.

"Yes; but I had hardly time to do so, he rushed off the moment I began to thank him; in fact, I thought him a little rude . . ."

The poor woman has never understood to this moment why her husband broke into tears that day.

I think that all those who will have read this story will agree with me that the man who has done what Count Witte did on this occasion is one who deserves to be admired and respected as the noblest of gentlemen, and I feel sure that in the future nobody who has read this episode will credit any of the base calumnies which his enemies may attempt to spread about him. No man gifted with so great and generous a heart could ever be guilty of a mean act either in politics or in private life.

CHAPTER XIX

COUNT WITTE—THE STATESMAN

COUNT WITTE* belongs to a good old family, and he can claim descent from the great Cornelius De Witte, although for many generations the branch of the family to which the Russian Premier belongs has been settled in Russia and has adopted Russian nationality.

He was born in the Caucasus and has two brothers ; one, a lawyer, who holds an important appointment as Procureur-General (public prosecutor); the other is a colonel in the army. After completing his university course, Count Witte entered the railway service and soon rose to the position of station-master, a position which corresponds more to the one occupied by the traffic superintendents in charge of a section on our English railways, than to the position of an English station-master. He distinguished himself, and was soon appointed station-master at Odessa, one of the most important positions in the railway service. His great ability brought him to the notice

* Pronounced Vitt  (like *vita* in inevitable and *la i table*).

of M. Wysznegradski, a high official, whose influence secured for M. Witte the post of manager to the south-western railway system at Kieff. In this responsible position he was able to display his remarkable aptitude as organiser, and when M. Wysznegradski became Finance Minister he placed M. Witte in charge of the railway department as Director-General of State Railways. The fresh services which he rendered soon secured for him the post of Minister of Ways and Communications (*voies et communications*). His former patron, M. Wysznegradski, having retired through ill-health, M. Witte was selected by the Emperor to fill up the vacant post of Finance Minister.

It was in this position that he was able to reveal his genius as a financier, and the manner in which he succeeded in establishing in Russia a sound financial position is remarkable.

By establishing the sale of spirits as a Government monopoly he secured a large source of revenue for the State, which was increased by the purchase of the chief railway systems. He also proposed to create a State monopoly of Insurance, but this scheme fell through. He created a service of Inspection of Factories, the chief object of which was to act as a go-between with the employers and their workmen.

But his greatest achievement is, I think, the introduction of a gold standard, which put an end to the ever-recurring fluctuations of the value of

Russian money. To carry out this scheme without loss to the Treasury he increased the value of the gold rouble. The coins which until then had a face value of ten roubles were given roughly a value of fifteen roubles, but the paper money became redeemable in gold. From the point of view of business transactions this made no change, because paper money, which was exclusively used at the time, had only an actual value equal to the one definitely given to its equivalent in gold. For instance, paper money of a face value of sixteen shillings had to be given in exchange for a gold coin with a face value of 11s., but the fluctuating value of gold made commercial transactions rather insecure. The creation of a gold standard put an end to this state of things, and it gave the Treasury a considerable increase of funds,* because nearly all the gold existing in Russia stood in the hands of Government. In consequence every million of roubles held by the Treasury became worth about one and a half millions. The old rouble coins were melted down and a fresh gold coinage was issued. Out of a number of old gold coins having a total value of 660 roubles 100 new gold coins were made having a value of 1000

* Formerly £1 was worth 6.75 roubles gold, while now 9.40 roubles are worth £1. In order to make the operation clearly understood, it may be said that a coin of the same weight and standard as an English sovereign had a value of 6.75 roubles, while the same coin weighing the same amount as an English sovereign has now a fixed value of 9.40 roubles.

roubles. In a word, the weight of gold used formerly to make 67 coins worth 670 roubles was converted into 94 gold coins with a total value of 940 roubles. For transactions with foreign markets this meant no change, as, previously, a premium of 34 to 40 per cent. had to be paid for gold; for transactions in Russia herself things remained as before, because previously all payments were made in paper money, and all those who had gold could obtain between 950 and 1050 roubles in notes for every 670 roubles in gold which they wanted to change. At the same time, the adoption of a gold standard gave Russian money a stability which proved most beneficial.

Count Witte has married a Jewess, but perhaps for that reason he has refrained from giving to the Jewish question precedence among the reforms which he is trying to introduce in Russia. He was afraid that he might be suspected of being actuated by the desire of favouring the Jews through personal consideration for the interests of his wife and her family. The Jews complain that under his administration numerous new regulations have added to the sufficiently overwhelming burden with which they were already loaded, but I confess that I have failed to get a satisfactory answer when I have asked those who complained to specify the measures which have made their condition worse than before, and for which they hold Count Witte responsible.

I have also been told that the Russian people

have been crushed by the heavy amount of taxation imposed by Count Witte to balance his budget ; yet I found that people paying £500 for the rent of their house have altogether less than £40 to pay in all for rates and taxes, except a very small supplementary amount for income tax (5 per cent. I think on their yearly income). Succession dues are almost nominal, ranging from 1 to 5 per cent. on the assets of the inheritance, the percentage increasing according to the decreasing degree of relationship of the beneficiary ; descendants in direct line having to pay 1 per cent., and strangers 5 per cent.

Altogether, whatever Count Witte may have done in the way of introducing fresh taxation I think that the Russians cannot complain, and that they are well able to bear a considerable increase in the amount which they contribute towards the expenditure of the Empire. What proves how sound Count Witte's financial methods are is the significant fact that he has secured the full support of the great banks.

Among the innovations due to his initiative may be mentioned the increased importance which he gave to the part played by the State Bank. He has also given a considerable extension to the savings banks so as to benefit the people, while the innovation proved profitable to the Treasury ; the savings banks brought into the State coffers large sums at a lower rate of interest than the one which would have been paid on loans of the same amount.

It must also be noted that large sums are yearly accumulating in the form of deposits which remain unclaimed by the people, either because the relatives of deceased depositors are unaware that money has been deposited at the savings bank, or through small depositors losing their bank book and not knowing what steps to take to obtain a fresh one.

Nevertheless, these savings banks have done much good and have been a great help to poor people who could not have saved money without the facility which these institutions gave them.

Count Witte was rewarded for the services he had rendered by being appointed President of the Committee of Ministers, a purely honorary distinction, which, before a Constitution had been granted, carried no special weight.

When the Emperor agreed to open negotiations with Japan to discuss the terms of a possible peace, Count Witte was selected to represent Russia on account of his superior ability as a financier. Peace, so far as Russia was concerned, depended not so much upon the terms which would be offered or demanded by Japan as upon the success of negotiations for the raising of a loan which would secure the means of facing the expenditure of the administration after the war.

Count Witte managed to get the support of the Jewish capitalists of Russian extraction who were settled in the United States, and this may be said to have settled the question of peace.

The Russians—I am speaking of men in a leading position in liberal professions—are fully convinced that Japan was exhausted and that far more favourable terms of peace could have been made ; in fact, they believe that the island of Shagallien was sacrificed, and that it could have been retained by Russia had not the Tsar sent peremptory orders to give it up partly to Japan. It is also a matter of common belief that if Japan had been beaten by Rosjovenski the British fleet would have attacked the Russian Squadron, and the famous statement made by Rosjovenski on this subject only reflects the general opinion which prevails in Russia. When Count Witte left Russia to represent the Tsar at the Peace Conference he had no powers, and neither the Emperor nor his entourage nor anybody else in Russia looked upon M. Witte's mission as likely to offer the least chance of success. In fact, his bitterest enemies supported his appointment because they meant to make capital out of his failure, which they considered certain.

His success, therefore, placed him in a position of unparalleled eminence, and his influence with the Emperor became unbounded. This enabled him to prevail upon the Tsar to desist from the policy of half measures which had been followed till then, and when he placed before his Imperial master the text of the Manifesto, which he had elaborated with Prince Obolenski, he was able to obtain the Imperial sanction, and he possessed sufficient prestige to get

the Tsar to affix his signature to a document which marks the most decisive step which has ever been taken by any of the rulers of Russia. Count Witte not only did a grand service to his country, but he did a still greater service to the Tsar and his dynasty. He saved Russia from a revolution, and he made the name of Tsar Nicolas II. immortal in history as the benefactor of Russia ; he did more, he saved his throne, his dynasty, and probably his life.

Count Witte himself will only have full justice done to him in years to come. At present, ever since he has accepted the task of carrying out the programme which he has drafted, he has been the butt of the most virulent abuse from those who want the old system of absolutism to prevail, as well as from those who have long clamoured for reforms, and who are still so astonished at the extent of the promises which have been made by the Tsar's Manifesto that they remain convinced that Count Witte means to oppose their fulfilment. The suggestion is absurd : they ought to consider that the Russian Premier has nothing to gain by his present position. He has wealth, honours, domestic happiness, and neither the pecuniary profit nor the satisfaction of ambition can counterbalance the arduousness of his task and the personal risk to which he is daily exposed.

He is abused by most people ; the most infamous charges are made against his character, his honour,

and his integrity ; he never leaves his house without having to fear the bullet or the knife of some assassin, if he escapes a worse fate—the explosion of a bomb which may not kill him but maim him for life. Even in his house he cannot feel secure from the attack of some fanatic, and yet he does not shrink from duties which expose him to all those dangers, and he devotes his life to a work for which he only receives ingratitude from those whose interests he has at heart.

The only compensation lies in the knowledge that the day will come when the sons of those who so bitterly abuse him will mention his name with reverence and admiration, and in future generations the whole of Russia will look upon him as the founder of a New Russia, free, wealthy, and the home of a great and prosperous nation.

CHAPTER XX

INTERVIEW WITH COUNT WITTE

THE time came when I was to meet this strong man of Russia of whom even his enemies had given me such a picture.

I began by expressing to Count Witte my astonishment, when I arrived in Russia, to find no trace of revolution or even sign of popular excitement in St. Petersburg.

"May I ask you," I then said, "whether you consider a fresh revolution possible now?"

"What do you mean by now?" queried the Count.

"I mean in the immediate future."

"Then," replied the Premier, "I can emphatically reply that there is no chance of it. You see the people have learnt what the promises of the revolutionaries mean and they are not likely to trust them again. There may be partial movements, individual attempts against Ministers and men in high office, but no great combined movement like those of last year."

"Can you tell me to what you ascribe the origin of the events last year? Does not the manner in

which the general strike and other demonstrations were organized indicate the leadership of some powerful brain or combination of brains ? ”

“ No. The demonstrations and revolutionary outbursts were not the consequence of a well-matured organization under some great leader. They were the consequence of circumstances of a strong and widespread spirit of discontent which arose out of the unfortunate, *deplorable* (I should say) war with Japan, a war which was unnecessary and disastrous : it also arose out of the mistakes committed by our Government in days gone by. This led the people to be seized with a kind of madness and no leader was necessary to cause them to rise ; it was sufficient that some one should set the example for all to follow.

“ It is as if, for instance, a disease came to affect the mass of the people, a disease consisting in the belief that they must jump into the Neva. For a long time every man might pass the river and think that he ought to jump in but still hesitate and return home where the idea that he must do so sooner or later would keep haunting his mind.

“ It would then be sufficient for one man to take the decisive step and all the others would follow him and jump in after him. Such a man could not be called a leader. It is the same with the revolution of last year : the people did not require organization, and the moment a first group began to strike all followed suit automatically.”

“ But,” I remarked, “ was there no leader at the head of the movement? ”

“ No ; there were a great many leaders or, rather, men who realized the popular state of mind which I have described, and who took advantage of it, but there was not one man who had a definite plan or object in view. The manner in which the movement spread is easily explained : the moment the telegraph clerks had begun to get out of control Russia became flooded with false rumours. First, telegrams were sent from St. Petersburg representing that I had been hanged with Durnovo in front of the Winter Palace, that the Tsar had fled to Denmark, that a republic had been proclaimed and a constitution (?) established. At the same time telegrams were published here, alleged to come from Odessa, Kieff, and every provincial government where a republic was said to have been proclaimed, the troops headed by the governor being represented as having joined the new order of things. In consequence, numerous risings and demonstrations took place through the spirit of imitation. I may here say that I had so well anticipated the possibility of the telegraph strike and the consequences which might follow that I had given special powers to the provincial governors, so that, in the event of their being cut off from communications with me, they would have the power of proclaiming at once martial law in their province, or any part of it, in which they might deem it necessary.

“As you see, the revolutionaries themselves are responsible for the extraordinary measures which have had to be adopted and which their own action brought about.

“As I have told you,” Count Witte went on, “the faults committed by the Government have been chiefly responsible for last year’s disturbances. I have served under three different Emperors, Alexander II., Alexander III., and my present master. I remember how Alexander II.’s reign began in a spirit of most advanced liberalism ; freedom was granted to the serfs, and the Emperor was even determined to grant Russia a constitution. What happened however ? The Nihilists repeatedly attempted to take the Emperor’s life and, in consequence, reaction obtained the upper hand. This, mind you, I call weakness : a strong Ruler must not allow his purpose to be changed because of the individual acts of a small section of irresponsible fanatics. Notwithstanding the activity of the Nihilists, the Emperor should have stuck to his original policy. Who knows ? It might probably have saved his life in the end. The circumstances under which Alexander III. ascended the throne influenced his own policy, and it was reserved for the Emperor Nicholas to open a new era for Russia.

“You must, however, remember that whatever faults our Emperors may have committed no motives of personal interest can be assigned to them. They

had, and have, nothing to gain or to lose by following one policy rather than another ; that they believed that they were acting for the good of their people and their country can neither be doubted or even discussed.

“ Take our present Emperor : people may pretend that he is not a great statesman ; people may assert that he committed a grievous mistake in declaring war on Japan ; but even if such is the case, no base or sordid motives can be alleged to have actuated him.

“ I will tell you what, sir ; I know his Majesty well, and often when I have had an interview with him I cannot help thinking that if he were not an Emperor he would be a saint. I have never yet met a man whose life is more simple and pure ; I have never known a man who has so high a conception of right and wrong, so earnest a desire to do what is right, and who dreads more to do what may not be so. As I may have said, he may have committed mistakes—he is but a man after all, and where is the man who does not commit a mistake ? But if he has ever done so, it has been under the impression that he was acting for the good of his country and of the people entrusted to his care.

“ But to return to my subject. If you take history, you will find that progress cannot be accomplished by a sudden leap. It must come gradually, little by little, or else it is bound to produce a violent commotion without benefiting the people half as much.

If reforms had been gradually brought about since the reign of the Emperor Alexander II. we should have reached the condition which it is my aim to introduce in Russia without the violent disruptions which have followed the Manifesto of October last. But although progress should come as a gradual process, when it has been too long delayed it can no longer be postponed and everything must be done at once which ought to have taken a score of years to elaborate. In order to illustrate my meaning, I will say that Russia is like a child which has had clothes made at the age of three years and which has been left in these same clothes until it has reached its sixth year. Its limbs have been compressed, and it has become crippled through it: at last the suffering becomes unbearable, and its temper has also been affected by the pain and the discomfort. To try and enlarge the garment is impossible; a brand new one must be ordered, or else the old one will burst or, again, the unfortunate child will tear it away. Only, even then when the child puts on the new suit, its limbs will go on aching through its past sufferings, and it will take many years before it resumes its normal development. This exactly illustrates the present condition of Russia. We have ordered a new suit for the child, but although it would feel happy and comfortable in it if its previous development had been normal it still feels discomfort, which it attributes, in its ignorance, to its new clothes, not realising that what it suffers from is from

the effects of the misfitting garments which it has been wearing until now, and that it is not the suit which wants altering but its own body, which must be gradually rebuilt, a matter which must take years to successfully carry out."

"What about the Duma?" I then asked. "Do you think that it will be what some people predict, a parliament in which the lower classes will not be represented?"

"Far from it. I believe that the peasant element will predominate in it, and this may prove a cause of much anxiety and trouble. In fact, the most important question of the future, the question which will offer the greatest difficulty of solution, is the agrarian question. When the serfs were liberated each man received a certain amount of land, for which he was to pay in instalments running for a long period of years. Gradually, as a new generation came, they lost sight of the fact that what they paid yearly was in part payment for the purchase of their land; they looked upon it as a tax, and it seemed to them unfair that they should pay this 'tax' while nothing was paid by the great land-owners, who naturally had nothing to pay as they had received nothing. Although we have remitted the balance which remained due still the peasants are dissatisfied, and they cry for more land without considering where it can be found. The question is, as I said, a very grave and serious one, and too complicated for me to discuss now."

"Many people," I said, "attack you in consequence of the spirit monopoly which you have established. Some pretend that it should be done away with. What is the truth of the matter?"

"The truth," exclaimed the Premier, with much warmth, "is that I am proud of having had this measure passed; and I say more, there will not be a single Government which may succeed me which will ever think of abolishing it.

"Before the adoption of the monopoly the Russian workman and peasant was poisoned with the most abominable poison sold as spirit. Now, we have not suppressed the distilleries, but distillers can only sell their products to Government, by whom the raw spirit is fully rectified and sold direct to the consumer, who is certain to get absolutely unadulterated stuff. Moreover, the purchaser cannot consume the spirit on the spot but must take it away. This has suppressed the public-houses, and in addition it enables Government to regulate the time when the sale can take place; if, for instance, there is excitement in a certain district we close the spirit stores for one day or two days, or for a number of hours daily, and so prevent the people from adding to their excitement with drink.

"If you consider the matter from a financial point of view you will find that it has increased the revenue of the State by 100 millions of roubles without any increase in the consumption of spirit in the country."

“But,” I said, “some people allege that peasants have been put in prison because they urged their friends not to purchase drink, and it is also said that spirit stores have been opened in places where no public-houses existed before.”

“The first statement is absurd and a lie. It is possible that men have been imprisoned for causing a disturbance under the pretext of advocating temperance, but not because they advocated temperance. As to the second statement it is equally untrue or, rather, presented under a false light. Stores have been opened in places where no public-houses existed before, because the places have grown in importance and the people had to waste much time in going far away to purchase drink.

“On the whole, the only remedy to intemperance is to get the people not to require drink ; so long as they will have it I think that it is far better that they should purchase a wholesome and pure article instead of allowing unscrupulous publicans to poison them as they used to do formerly ; and it seems to me that what we have done in suppressing public-houses and in restricting the sale of intoxicants in such a way as to compel purchasers to carry away their drink is one of the steps which your English temperance advocates have often urged as an alternative of local option which has always been rejected by English public opinion (I am, of course, speaking of the majority).”

“So,” I said, “to return to the revolution, you

think that there is no real leader at the back of what has taken place last year? "

" Absolutely none. The demonstrations which have taken place have been the spontaneous outburst of a people who, long held in subjection, were suffering in silence because the law did not let them speak out. Suddenly they were allowed to express their thoughts aloud. The press was permitted to make itself heard, and the change was so sudden, so colossal, that what was meant for liberty became licence, and in their ignorance many imagined that liberty meant the right for every man of doing as he pleased without regard for the rights or the welfare of his neighbours. Those men who were raising their voice to denounce the tyranny of the administration were aiming at imposing their own tyranny upon their neighbours.

" The revolution was also greatly due to our defective education ; until now you see our schools have been conducted in a most deplorable manner. No attention has been paid to the physical development of the children, no care has been taken to teach them to 'think,' and to judge of things for themselves. Their mind has been crammed with a mass of facts which children were trained to repeat like parrots without ever being educated to consider cause and effect. They were taught many things, but they were never taught to learn and think. In your English schools it is not so much what the children learn which helps them in after life ; the great

benefit which they derive from their school days is chiefly due to the fact that at school they are trained to learn, and they are prepared to acquire knowledge, and when they enter life they are able to profit by the lessons which life gives them every day. The education of our Russian youth may be said to have ended when they leave school, while that is the very time when in England a young man's education really begins. The result is that so many of my countrymen remain for ever children in their knowledge of the world. This is why the revolutionaries are themselves absolutely ignorant of what they want and take ideals for reality. They imagine, for instance, that certain abuses can be reformed suddenly without considering their cause and origin, and without suspecting that the smallest alteration in the methods of one individual department involves a complete change in every branch which depends upon it."

"Now," I said, "may I ask you a last question? The Jews, from all I have been able to ascertain, are undoubtedly oppressed by many iniquitous laws and regulations. Can you tell me to what must be attributed the antagonism which exists against them, and whether it is very strong and widespread?"

"There is no doubt," replied Count Witte, "that the Jews have been disgracefully treated, and every one knows that I am in favour of removing the unfair laws which affect them, but here again the problem is a most difficult one. It is like what I

have explained before concerning the desirability of gradual progress, but here again the illustration of the child and his clothes applies in this case. The restrictions which surround the Jews will have to be removed *en bloc*, but they will themselves suffer for it. First of all, because the antagonism against them will become far more pronounced ; this antagonism is due to two causes. First, but not to a great extent, it is a question of religion or rather superstition, as we Russians are very superstitious. The main reason, however, of the feeling against the Jews is almost an entirely economic one. The Jews are better business men, they are more sober, more provident than the other Russians, and, in consequence, they are more successful than their competitors who are jealous of them. The majority of Russian Jews are small shopkeepers who, with a paltry capital of a few roubles, manage to exist where others fail. Instead of being content with a profit of one rouble out of an article which they will sell for two roubles, the Jew will prefer to make a profit of one rouble out of five articles which he sells for so many roubles ; so that his capital is constantly at work ; he cuts down his competitors and secures all the trade. With a capital of twenty roubles he will make a profit of four roubles, but he will save two roubles out of that, and reinvest twenty-two roubles, while the Russian who has the same capital will make a profit of ten roubles out of it in a week's time and spend the whole of his profit. Thus the

Russian will keep on making ten roubles profit a week, but his capital will always remain the same, while the Jew will at first make less profit, but his capital will go on increasing, and after a few weeks his profits will exceed the Russian's and his capital will have doubled, and always continue to increase as well as his profit. When you therefore consider that the Jews, notwithstanding the restrictions to which they are submitted, manage to beat their competitors, it will be understood that when these restrictions are removed, the feeling of jealousy against them will increase tenfold. Then you must remember that the Jews, having nothing to lose and everything to gain, have thrown themselves headforemost into the revolution, and the consequence is that they have alienated many sympathies which they had secured before. In fact, I should say that if the Duma had met six months ago, any measure which would have then been proposed for their benefit would have been passed with unanimous approval, while now, when the Duma meets, I shall feel most astonished if any measure intended for the benefit of the Jews does not meet with violent opposition, and with opposition backed by a large majority.

“To conclude,” said the Premier, “I can only say that I am bound to recognize that we are not ripe in Russia for all the reforms which his Majesty has promised by the Manifesto of October. We are not

ripe for them, and yet we cannot postpone their fulfilment. It is like medicine: a doctor gives us a bottle of physic, which taken by tea-spoonful doses daily, will do us much good. If we take the whole bottle at one dose it will make us violently sick, although we may get over it in time. Yet if we did not take the medicine at all we would surely die, and we must take the whole bottle at one dose because it will not keep.

“It is the same with reforms: they have become indispensable to the life of the Russian nation, and although they would have proved far more beneficial had we been able to apply them by a gradual process, it is impossible to think of it. Their adoption is therefore bound to upset us at first, but Russia is full of resources, the Russian people are full of qualities, and we shall emerge from the ordeal a greater nation than we have been at any of the most glorious periods of our history.

“What encourages me the more to predict all this is that I know how earnest and how sincere my Imperial master is in his resolve to do his duty by his nation. The late Queen Victoria was looked upon as the noblest woman in the British Empire, and in the same way the Emperor Nicholas can be termed the noblest gentleman in the Russian Empire. By abdicating his autocratic powers for the good of his people he has increased his strength, because he possesses such virtues as a man, that to know him is to worship him, and whoever, like

myself, accepts the burden of office will never have to fear that anything which he may do for the good of the people and the greatness of the Empire may not meet, not only with the approval, but also with the full recognition of one who embodies every ideal which makes Russia the great nation she is.

“To serve my Tsar is, therefore, to serve my country, and I love both equally—with heart and soul. So long, therefore, as God gives me strength enough to do so I shall remain at my post ; but I shall only do so provided that I find it possible to carry out what I know to be my master’s most earnest wishes consistent with my nation’s good.”

This conversation gives, I think, the correct appreciation of the present situation of Russia, and it concords entirely with my own observations and with the conclusion to which I have come so far.

CHAPTER XXI

TRAITORS IN CAMP

WE have seen how Count Witte has to contend not only against the partisans of the old order of things, but also against those who have been agitating to obtain the very reforms which the Government endeavours to carry out.

One would, however, hardly believe it possible that men high in office would push audacity to the point of making use of the offices of one of the ministers to set up a printing press to print millions of proclamations inciting to the murder of those who are trying to introduce reforms or even advocate them ; an appeal to popular passion which is tantamount to urging the murder of Count Witte and his colleagues. Astonishing as it may appear, I will show how such proclamations have been printed in the chief offices of Government ; and I will show how prominent officials belonging to the police and other departments have been employed in this work of treason, and have not only remained unpunished but have been highly rewarded by one of the present ministers of Count Witte's Cabinet.

It is true that we are not competent to judge of methods with which we are so unfamiliar; taking the case from a point of view absolutely apart from local considerations, it was perhaps as well to avoid an inquiry which might have led the public in Russia and abroad to see how powerful, unscrupulous and audacious Count Witte's enemies are. Moreover, it is doubtful whether any form of inquiry could have led to the discovery of the real truth. I will now give a detailed account of the facts to which I have just alluded. I may add that my information comes from a source which precludes all suggestions of its being incorrect.

I have hinted that the resignation of Count Witte is not improbable. Here are details of one plot against him.

Rumours of differences between him and some of the members of his Cabinet have been particularly frequent of late, and although they have been officially denied, I am in a position to assert that they not only exist, but also that they have reached a most acute stage.

Only a few persons in the Premier's immediate entourage were, until lately, aware of the cause of this state of affairs, and even the majority of members of the Cabinet were kept in ignorance of the facts which have come to my knowledge. I can, however, guarantee that my information is correct in every particular; it has been conveyed to me by some one whose veracity is unimpeachable, who

knows the facts in their most minute details, and who has had every document in his own hands. I am, however, bound by a formal promise not to disclose his name, which is as well known abroad as on this side of the Channel. Here is now the story as my friend gave it to me: Within the last few months Russia has been flooded to the remotest districts with a voluminous mass of violent proclamations. The tone of the proclamations, and the manner in which they were distributed, pointed to the existence of a powerful political organization, constituted by men determined to prevent, at all cost, the fulfilment of the promises contained in the Manifesto of October last. In order to gain their object they endeavoured to provoke popular demonstrations against all those who would support the principles of the Manifesto. These men were painted as enemies of the Tsar and fierce revolutionaries carrying fire and sword everywhere. They knew that the revolutionary outburst of Moscow, and the excesses committed there by the insurgents, had so frightened the majority of Russians that they felt sure that an active propaganda would keep alive the terrors inspired by the Moscow rising, and lead the people to use every kind of violence against men who would be held responsible for those days of bloodshed, and whose very existence would be represented as likely to cause a renewal of those days of terror.

Russia was accordingly flooded with leaflets and proclamations calling upon the people to fight

against the revolution, and its supporters, "who were not only the militant Socialists, and the Democrats who oppose the Tsar, but also all those who endeavour to introduce a Constitution in Russia." The proclamations so issued were of three kinds: one set was for the people of the lower classes, who were urged to massacre the Jews, Poles, and Armenians, all of whom were described as the enemies of Russia. A second set, meant for the middle classes, described as "revolutionaries" all those who were in favour of a Constitution, and called themselves the advocates of liberty and progress. A third set was specially devised for the soldiers, calling upon them to defend the Tsar, and to exterminate all the enemies of the Emperor, who are, first, the *Inorodtsi* (Russians of foreign extraction, such as the Jews, Poles, Armenians, &c.), and next those "who have broken their oath and who have betrayed their country," and who wish to introduce in Russia liberal reforms.

It was known that these proclamations were printed in St. Petersburg and distributed all over the country through agents of the "Russian Assembly," a political society organised with the object of supporting the principles of "Russia for the Russians."

Tens of thousands of these proclamations were sent to every town of the Empire, where they were handed over for distribution to "trusted" men, taken among the local officials and chiefly among

the police. All efforts to discover where this dangerous literature was printed had been vain, when accidental circumstances brought to the knowledge of Count Witte, the Premier, the long-sought-for information. Incredible as it may seem, this clandestine printing-press was working at Fontanka No. 16. Now, to a Russian, Fontanka No. 16, where the Home Office is, means as much as Downing Street to an Englishman. The printing-press had been set in a disused room of the Ministry of the Interior in the offices of the Department of Police. It was worked under the direction of an officer of gendarmes called Komissaroff, under the supervision of the noted Ratchkofski, an official "*délegué aux commissions extraordinaires*" (on special service) at the Home Office. This Ratchkofski has gained considerable notoriety as a secret police spy, in which capacity he has travelled all over Europe to watch Russian exiles.

All the proclamations issued by this clandestine printing-press were only printed after having been submitted for approval and correction to a well-known general, whose energetic repression of the revolution has attracted considerable attention. Proofs of the proclamations, corrected in his own handwriting, were discovered, together with thousands of copies ready for despatch, and it is calculated that over three millions of them had already been distributed. The existence of this secret printing-press was revealed to Count Witte through

his "Chef de Cabinet" (head of his staff), M. Vouitch, whose brother, a high official of the Ministry of Interior, is at the head of the Police Department, the offices of which had been selected to cover the printing operations of this clandestine press. M. Vouitch, having visited the various offices of his department with a view to making some alterations, was startled by discovering in some disused rooms in an isolated portion of the building a printing-press with the incriminating documents which I have mentioned. He informed his brother at once of what he had found, and the press was immediately destroyed by Count Witte's orders. Further inquiry revealed the names of those responsible for so gross a scandal. The few high officials at the Ministry of Interior, who became aware of these facts, expected that speedy and condign punishment would fall upon the men who had been connected with this disgraceful plot; but they were dumbfounded when they found that, instead of being punished, Ratchkofski had been paid, on February 9 (January 27, old style), out of the secret service funds, the sum of 75,000 roubles (£8000) by order of M. Durnovo, Minister of the Interior, as a reward for "exceptional services." The captain of gendarmes was himself provided with another post.

It is easily understood how all this has brought to a climax the friction between Count Witte and M. Durnovo, which until then had already been acute. The Premier, without disclosing his dis-

covery to the Tsar, urged the Emperor to change the Minister of Interior, "with whom he found it impossible to work in harmony." The Emperor, after giving his sanction, was influenced by Trepoff, and he subsequently informed Count Witte that he wished M. Durnovo to remain in office until the elections were over.

All this accounts for the rumours of dissension among the members of the Witte Cabinet. Whether this will lead to the Premier's resignation is not certain, but it is quite possible.

CHAPTER XXII

CONCLUSION— I

I THINK that I have made it clear that the demonstrations and insurrections which broke out in rapid succession in various portions of Russia had all an independent character, although each of them occurred as the consequence of another one, and in many cases as the consequence of mere rumour, circulated for the purpose of causing the people to believe that other towns and provinces had risen.

The revolutionary movement may, therefore, be compared to a picture-gallery where a number of pictures of a certain school are collected together; although by different masters, they all possess a similarity of character, special to the school and epoch to which they belong.

One demonstration only—the general strike—has been the result of a powerful organisation with extended ramifications, and it shows the irresistible power of combination and co-operation. As a political movement it is without precedent in history. Without violence, without bloodshed, the government of one of the mightiest modern Empires was

reduced to absolute isolation and was rendered powerless. The most interesting side of this demonstration is, however, its purely negative result from the strikers' point of view. If we look backward upon the various great revolutionary movements of the past we find great popular upheavals reducing the existing government to helplessness, but in such cases the government's position was due to the fact that another power had risen in its place and was itself ruling the country.

When the general strike, on the contrary, took place in Russia, the leaders of the movement remained unseen although their power could be felt; the obscurity in which they remained shrouded surrounded them with a halo of mystery which gave them, for the time being, the appearance of being unconquerable.

Had the whole of the revolutionary demonstrations been carried out in the same manner the anonymous leaders, swaying by unseen means a multitude of hundreds of thousands, would have carried everything before them. Their strength lay in the fact that they appeared to ask nothing for themselves, that they did not either assume or even attempt to assume power. They were content to set in motion the irresistible phalanx of the strikers, giving to the government the alternative between yielding to some demands or else being automatically reduced to a position of non-existence, making of Russia a body without a head.

Then was the moment for these mysterious leaders to assert themselves, to come boldly forward, and despising all personal risk, to formulate the demands of the people. If these were granted they would have undertaken to bring the strike to an immediate end.

Instead of which they persisted in keeping in the shadow, and opened themselves to the charge of cowardice or inefficiency. The strike came to an end, collapsing through lack of funds; the strikers gained nothing and lost much, and they began to realise the incapacity of their leaders, who had made so many promises, none of which had been kept.

Of course, we know now that the soul of this unique demonstration was the famous Croustaliouff; we have just seen why the man, who was able to group for common action a huge army of workmen and artisans, subsequently failed to bring about similar demonstrations. I have previously shown that the leading part which he played was not so much due to his own personal magnetism, to the possession of the gift of carrying away men behind him, as to the fact of his having found himself handy to assume the leadership of men who were already prepared and determined to rise." He found the train laid and had only to apply the match to it: the part which he played was that of a successful *émeutier*, not that of a leader. It is a remarkable fact that a man who could engineer so colossal a movement as the general strike should have

possessed so small a place in the hearts of those who had implicitly obeyed his orders. When General Dedouline arrested Croustalioff there was no demonstration, no popular outcry to claim his release. He passed away and was forgotten.

Let us, on the other hand, imagine Count Witte being dismissed by the Emperor, or resigning his position. Russia would ere long discover what she has lost : even those who now denounce him with such bitterness would very soon mourn his retirement from office. Friends and foes would then realize that he is the only man capable of holding in check the Socialists as well as the Reactionaries, and his removal from the leadership of the nation would leave a blank which no other man could fill up.

To make a comparison between Croustalioff, the would-be leader of a Revolution, and Count Witte, the head of the Russian Empire, seems at first sight as absurd as it would be to draw a parallel between Jack Cade and Pitt.

At the same time I feel justified in making the comparison, because Croustalioff has played a great, although accidental, part in securing for Russia the Constitution granted by the Tsar's Manifesto of October 17. As we have seen, every manifestation and popular demonstration of the beginning of last year was immediately followed by some concession granted by the Tsar, but it is doubtful whether Count Witte would have possessed an influence

sufficient to secure the Emperor's assent to the Constitution if the great demonstrations organized by Croustaliouff had not convinced the Tsar of the necessity of taking a decisive step, instead of persisting in the policy of nominal and barren concessions which gave satisfaction to nobody and irritated most of his subjects.

Much abuse has been lavished upon the Tsar Nicholas. He has been accused of selfishness, of greed, and has even been branded as a coward. Such abuse is the more despicable in that it is undeserved.

No man is a coward who sits on the throne of Russia. As to his alleged "criminal policy," even assuming that he should have made mistakes, it is impossible to suspect the Tsar of base or sordid motives. What had he to gain? Ambition? What ambition can a Tsar of Russia have except to leave a great honoured name in history? Greed? How can such a word apply to a sovereign who possesses untold wealth, which he cannot even spend?

The truth is, that the Emperor is so imbued with a sense of his high duty and responsibility, that the fear of committing an injustice, the fear of wronging a portion of his subjects to benefit another, has often kept him from acting with the decision which would have been necessary to cope with a situation which had to be faced. But the very fact of his having relinquished that autocratic power, which he had inherited from his ancestors, shows how great and noble Tsar Nicholas really is.

Now I must return to the charge of cowardice which has constantly been made against him,—the most serious which could be made against any man. I remember how on the day of his wedding he allowed the windows to be opened in the houses along the route which he followed to go from the palace to the cathedral with his newly-wedded wife. Never before had this permission been granted for fear of a bomb being thrown from one of the open windows, and the step which he took was the act of a brave man. I remember how, on another occasion, the Court officials were nearly distracted at finding that the Emperor and the Empress had left the palace unknown to all; he had gone alone with his bride, without guard or protection, to do some shopping. Are those the acts of a coward? No, emphatically no; it shows rather reckless bravery, which only those who are aware of the activity of the Nihilists, at the time of which I am speaking, can fully appreciate.

Whatever his faults may be, the Tsar Nicholas II. will leave an immortal name in the history of Russia for having given to his people a Constitution. The acts I have just mentioned show that he was not afraid of risking his life. The issue of the great Manifesto shows that he was prepared to relinquish his autocratic power when he thought it likely to benefit his subjects.

Those, however, who imagine that such a step is sufficient suddenly to transform the Russian Empire

from its present condition, which may be compared with that of England 500 years ago, into an Empire modelled on the British Empire of the twentieth century, must be either very simple or very ignorant.

As I have pointed out in one of the previous chapters, individual liberty, freedom of the press, and a popular Government through a Parliament elected by the people, can only be enjoyed to the extent which obtains in this country on the condition that the people be thoroughly trained to respect the rights of their neighbours. What the Russians must first learn is that every right involves a corresponding duty, a fact of which advanced reformers seem to remain unaware.

Neither is it sufficient to have a number of representatives elected and sitting in parliament to govern a country on strictly constitutional lines. Even in England, if it were possible to imagine a Parliament consisting entirely of new members, none of whom would have had the least previous experience of parliamentary life, I think that the result would be rather startling. Again, if, as may be expected, the Socialist element predominates in the Duma, violent opposition and startling demands are to be anticipated. It will, therefore, be absolutely impossible for any Government to secure a majority on two successive occasions, and the Cabinet will, consequently, have to take no notice of adverse votes. Before, however, anything else is done, rules of

procedure will have to be elaborated—to which many members will certainly object—and we may expect the first meetings of the new Assembly to result in a general pandemonium. I feel convinced that if the Socialists do not rise threateningly at once, the Agrarian party will do so during the first Session of the Duma—if the Assembly has not to be dissolved by the intervention of troops soon after it meets. One of the things which I am at an absolute loss to account for is why the Social Democrats want to endeavour to prevent the Duma from meeting. They propose reaching their end either by disorders on the day of polling so as to prevent the voters from going to the poll, or, if this does not succeed, by trying to organize a fresh railway strike to prevent the members elected from reaching St. Petersburg to constitute the Assembly.

It seems really incredible that whatever step the Revolutionary Party takes seems always totally devoid of object or devised with the purpose of putting obstacles to the claims which they themselves have made with such persistence. If we remember that the men who proclaimed their intention of acting in this insane fashion are clamouring against the Cabinet for allowing martial law to subsist in most of the provinces, we cannot help coming to the conclusion that it would be a grievous mistake on the part of Count Witte to suspend these exceptional measures which are evidently necessary

to check the senseless schemes of the advanced section of the Liberal Party.

Notwithstanding all the impediments which are placed in the way of the Premier by the very men who keep demanding that the reforms promised by the Tsar shall be instantly carried out, there is no fear that Count Witte will seize this pretext to follow the example of the Emperor Alexander II. and inaugurate a reactionary policy. In spite of every one and everything he is fully determined to carry out his task. I am certain that he will do so unless some fanatic deprives Russia of her greatest statesman and of the only strong man whom she possesses at the present crisis. And I mean by fanatics not only those who use bombs or cold steel, but also the fanatics who are only brave behind a Maxim gun against an unarmed crowd. Their other weapons, when they have to deal with men in power, are the secret press, outrageous lying, and calumny. But when the Duma meets we shall see whether the supporters of those men will have the courage to uphold their hired opinions in the presence of the true representatives of the Russian Nation.

CHAPTER XXIII

CONCLUSION—II

As will have been seen, the present condition of the Russian Empire calls for many radical changes which are imperative to give satisfaction to the people, or, what comes to the same, to those whom the people will follow if they urge them to rise. Although they may lack the power of combination, and be powerless to organize a revolution in the true sense of the word, they can foster local disorders which exhaust the country. What makes these reforms more necessary still is that the welfare and the prosperity of the country depend on them, and they are indispensable to permit the development of the Empire's vast natural resources. The first condition needed to secure this object is to obtain money from foreign investors, and this depends upon a confidence which can only be inspired by internal peace based on the stability of an administration capable of securing the support and the co-operation of the various sections of the community.

At the same time we cannot expect that the reforms which are most urgently needed can possibly

be carried out with the speed and thoroughness which the most advanced liberals anticipate or desire. Count Witte is, I feel sure, too experienced and too wise a statesman to try and precipitate a policy in a manner which would defeat the object which he has in view.

Undoubtedly there are abuses too flagrant to be tolerated any longer ; if they cannot be done away with at once, provisional steps will have to be devised to cope with them and reduce them to a minimum.

I think that reforms should be divided under two heads : those which are immediately needed and cannot be put off, and those which will have to be built up by a slow and gradual process upon foundations which must first be solidly established. Such is, for instance, the reform of the educational system, and closely linked to it the creation of a body of reliable civil servants.

Meanwhile efforts should be made to spread elementary education among the adolescents of the present generation by enforcing the military regulations already in existence : every soldier who joins the colours without knowing how to read and write is supposed to be taught in regimental schools ; no soldier to obtain his discharge unless he has been granted a certificate showing that he has successfully passed an examination upon the subjects taught in the primary schools. This regulation has so far never been enforced and its rigid observance should in the future be insisted upon.

At the same time the number of the primary schools will have to be increased at once : 90,000 schools are totally insufficient for a population of 140 millions. Compulsory education should also be gradually introduced, selecting first for the purpose a few provinces or great centres where the local conditions offer no excuse for the parents who will fail to submit to this law.

Count Tolstoi's views on the paramount importance which must be attached to the education of girls are full of common sense and should at once be carried into practical effect. "Educate the girls," he says, "and you prepare admirable teachers for the children of the next generation. It is the mother who really teaches her children to read and write, and these women will advance popular education more than we could do by multiplying primary schools and enforcing compulsory education. A mother who has had a sound education will feel proud to impart her knowledge to her children, but the mother, who is herself ignorant and uneducated, will resent compulsory education as a vexatious proceeding and will put every obstacle in the way of the observance of the law."

So much for immediate educational reform. The methods of teaching, the preparation of a body of good and enlightened teachers, the care which will have to be bestowed upon the physical training of children, concurrently with their mental development, will follow and give results in due time.

Already wonderful results have followed the advantages derived by the Jews from a superior education, which alone removes the chief disabilities to which they are subjected. Some special prerogatives or some material benefit offered to parents whose children will have obtained a certificate showing that they have satisfactorily passed the examination of primary education would prove an excellent stimulus. For example, let the parents whose children have received this certificate be entitled to a cash premium equivalent for each child to 10 per cent. of the taxation which they are called upon to pay yearly, such premium not to be less than ten roubles nor more than twenty roubles, and the result will, I think, exceed all anticipations.

The second imperative reform which must be considered is the reform of the administration. Needless to say, that to change the whole existing body of officials is impossible because none could be found to take their place. However bad they may be, yet they understand the routine of work which can only be acquired by long practical training. But they must be made to understand that the system of the past—bribery, oppression, and arbitrary proceedings will no longer be tolerated. Let laws be passed making such offences punishable with the most severe penalties and entailing the forfeiture of all pensions. Let private citizens possess the right of taking direct proceedings against any official who may have been guilty of any of the

above offences, the cost of the proceedings being refunded in case it is successful. At the same time, to protect officers against petty persecution, the prosecutor should be liable to punishment in case he fails to make out his case, such proceedings by private citizens to be only permitted in the event of the administration refusing to take up complaints fully authenticated by reliable testimony.

This, I consider, the *only solution* to the present unbearable situation due to the abuses of the bureaucracy. No official ought to be exempt from such proceedings except, of course, Cabinet Ministers and Governor-Generals, who could only be prosecuted with the previous assent of the Duma and the Senate or Council of State. This assent having been given, the trial would take place before a court consisting of the members of these Assemblies sitting formally and giving their verdict by a majority of at least two-thirds of the total number of members belonging to both Assemblies. The abolition of the restrictions which surround the Jews and of the laws of exception which have been passed against them calls next for immediate consideration. Care must, however, be taken in the interests of the Jews themselves not to proceed with undue haste, because this might cause a general outburst against them with which Government might really be unable to cope. There is, as I have explained, at present a strong current of popular feeling against them.

The problem may be looked upon as one of the

most serious which the present Government will have to solve. Justice must be done, and special care must be taken, at the same time, that 'in doing so a worse evil shall not fall upon those who suffer from the present injustice. How this can be achieved is more than I can say, but I would suggest that the Jews should show patience and avoid all violence if they want to gain their end.

A still more difficult problem is the agrarian question. The peasants' condition certainly deserves attention, but the solution of the difficulty appears to me not to consist merely in giving them sufficient land to supply them with food for themselves and their families; it 'would mean reducing them to the level of brutes if only their bestial wants were taken into consideration. A loftier ideal should be pursued, and might, I think, be attained by the creation and development of industries for which they would be called upon to supply the raw materials grown on their land. Whatever is done, the first thing which should be considered is how to create for them needs beyond the satisfaction of mere physical cravings; the next being to enable them to satisfy these needs. So far the peasants have not raised their voice save in some isolated cases, but if they do so and satisfaction is refused to them the result may be appalling.

The judicial reform closes the list of the great questions which have to be considered without delay. This reform will also require long and

patient efforts before complete satisfaction can be given to the people.

A first step might, however, be taken by abolishing the secret examination of prisoners ; let all examinations be in a public court, proceedings of this court and of the higher tribunal in cases which will be sent for trial being fully reported by the press. If such reports do not answer to a demand of the reader or if space in the daily papers does not permit of full reports, a special Gazette, exclusively devoted to the report of legal proceedings, might be issued by Government as a supplement to the Gazette reporting the sittings of the Duma, and the people would thus be educated to take interest in those subjects.

Another important question which must be considered, if justice is to be properly administered, is the one connected with the payment of judges. Instead of the present system under which justice is administered in Russia, a limited number of judges should be attached to the courts of the main towns of the Empire, men selected, as in England, from among the most brilliant members of the Bar, and receiving salaries sufficient to place them above all temptation ; in fact, Russia already possesses a body of men of this high character in the members of the Senate.

The first and main reform, however, which is needed at present is to bring all the judicial proceedings before courts open to the public.

In this rapid review I have said nothing of the claims of citizens who, while owing allegiance to the Russian Empire, belong, however, to distinct states, having a language, customs, laws, and religion of their own, such as Poland, Finland, and the Baltic Provinces.

To enter into all the details of the complicated questions which the introduction of reforms raises in Russia would require volumes, and it will be seen that I have been justified in stating that the task undertaken by Count Witte is 'almost superhuman. Those who blame him for not giving immediate satisfaction to all their demands which, however justified, must be taken in order of merit, forget that the more obstacles they put in his way, the longer they postpone the possibility of having their own case considered.

What makes his position still more difficult is that Count Witte stands alone, and that there is not a single other man in Russia who can second him when it comes to a decision of vital questions. He is, therefore, compelled to rely upon colleagues who often hinder him instead of giving him help. The paramount position which he occupies makes the responsibility for all the mistakes which are committed fall upon his shoulders, and what makes his position still more difficult is that some of his colleagues who deliberately oppose his wishes are imposed upon him, and he has not a free hand in their selection.

Abuse of power, ill-treatment of prisoners, injustice done to individuals or group of persons, attract the immediate attention of the public and, are reported broadcast, while all the admirable work which is now carried out by a man in Count Witte's position passes unperceived because nobody has any complaint to make. To find fault is most easy, but to discover what is praiseworthy is far more difficult.

A picture in which figures are painted with limbs out of proportion will attract the attention of the most ignorant, but only a select few, gifted with a superior sense of art, will be attracted by a beautiful painting or an exquisite work of art. It is the same with individuals and nations. All that differs from what it is accustomed to, strikes the crowd as ungainly, and is condemned because the vulgar and narrow minds which make up a crowd only consider facts without seeking to analyse the circumstances which are responsible for these apparent anomalies, and often makes them alone suitable to their surroundings.

To judge, therefore, of Russia and of the Russians we must look upon them from their own local point of view. This is what the Russian idealists absolutely forget when they take British institutions as the model according to which they would build up a new state of things.

CHAPTER XXIV

CONCLUSION—III

RUSSIA in this moment is not herself, and to judge of the men and of their acts by the present standard is not fair.

The people taken as a whole do not want—in fact, do not understand—political freedom : they feel the need of something indefinite but different from what exists at present, of something which will enable them to lead a peaceful life free from periods of cruel hardships, such as those through which they have lately had to go. The men have to bear the additional burden of seeing their wives and families subjected to sufferings which they are unable to relieve, and, urged by dire necessity, soon become desperate. What do the people really want?

The peasant demands more land : give him, however, some means of obtaining the equivalent of the surplus of food and of cash which the additional parcel of the land which he claims would mean for him and he will be satisfied.

The workman asks to be protected against the

tyranny of employers, who either compel him to overwork himself for inadequate wages or else give him the alternative of starvation.

The Jew insists upon being placed on a footing of equality with other Russians, and asks to be relieved from the overwhelming burden of iniquitous laws of exception. Satisfaction will have to be given to these well justified demands.

The educated classes, the students and professional men, the commercial classes, ask to be allowed to discuss freely the methods by which they want to be governed without being exposed to imprisonment. The more moderate among the Liberals, those gifted with common sense, acknowledge, however, that a check must be put upon the abuse which might be made of this privilege: but they ask that properly constituted tribunals should alone possess the right of inflicting punishment upon citizens. They want the total abolition of imprisonment by administrative order, and insist upon the principle that, except in cases of *flagrante delicto*, no citizen shall be arrested except upon a warrant granted by a civil court; limits to the time during which a prisoner shall be detained in prison before trial and public examination of all persons after arrest are other important points upon which they insist.

Their views upon the system, according to which a Constitutional Government is to be carried out, are vague and unsettled.

Let us now take the Duma before the members of which these questions will soon come.

If, as I have said in the previous chapter, the Duma has a majority composed of members belonging to the Socialist and Agrarian parties, their violent demands may lead to a grave crisis.

The crisis, however, is only temporary : even admitting the possibility of a civil war breaking out, Russia is bound to emerge from the ordeal greater and stronger than she has ever been. No popular disturbance can annihilate her natural resources, which are incalculable. When the people and the Government have come to an understanding ; when their mind shall have ceased to be absorbed by political strife, then will begin the true rise of the Russian Empire.

To discover the real extent of its resources, to develop those already known, can only be done by giving full scope to individual initiative and private competition, and by calling in the help of the foreigner. For instance, the mineral wealth of the country will never be turned to account until prospecting is open to all, irrespective of nationality, and until prospectors can transfer their rights to private companies. It has been proved conclusively that this method is the only one by which the mineral wealth of a country can be exploited. Let us take a country where prospecting is open to all : 2000 prospectors will, in a year, sink 2000 shafts and spend an average of £300 each, or £600,000, to which

should be added as much for value of labour. Against this sum of over one million must be put the profit realised by the prospectors. Twenty, who will make an average profit of £2000, is already a large figure, twenty more make £500 each, and sixty more cover their expenses, so that a total expenditure of one million will give a return of less than £100,000. It stands to reason that neither a Government nor a private company could embark on such an enterprise. To open the country to all is also the only manner in which the mineral value of a region can be tested, because every portion of the mineral belt is tapped. Russia must, therefore, if she wishes to develop her mineral wealth, open her doors wide to foreign prospectors until her own people have gained sufficient experience from them.

Agricultural development could also reach colossal limits if guarantee of security was offered to foreign investors. Russia has everything to gain by it, because it means labour for the people and increased revenue for the State.

This, of course, leads me to point out that Russia is entirely dependent upon foreign enterprise for her future expansion. There is no capital in Russia, and for that reason, also, care will have to be taken not to overburden large landowners with excessive taxation. Care will have also to be exercised in raising revenue; the lack of capital, for instance, would make the imposition of succession dues, copied on our own system, a measure which would only lead to national

ruin. At the same time, one of the first steps which the Duma will have to take will be to distribute taxation in such a way as to relieve the poorer classes of an excessive burden, and the deficit will have to be balanced by increasing the share of those who are better able to pay.

In conclusion, I can only say that I firmly believe in the future of Russia provided that Count Witte remains at the helm of the ship of State. The Russians, as a whole, may be slow of conception, ignorant, obstinate, but they have one redeeming virtue—they possess a kind heart and, although it may be hidden at times, they are incapable of long and persistent cruelty. Contrary to what is considered the attribute of northern races, the Russian character is one of excessive excitability; this is probably due to an acquired nervous disposition resulting from the conditions of personal insecurity in which the ancestors of the present generation have always lived.

Strong contrast is characteristic of everything Russian. When they are not excited the Russians are as phlegmatic as the typical Dutchman of tradition. Contrast is also remarkable in questions of morals—the upper classes are most debauched and the men indulge in the satisfaction of all bestial cravings with the same lack of refinement as the male portion of the lowest classes. Women, on the other hand, are thoroughly honest, reserved, temperate, and make the best of wives. From an

æsthetic point of view, Russian women, taken as a whole, are not remarkable for their beauty. You may, for instance, walk about the streets of the capital for half a day without having your attention attracted by a single woman: you pass many but notice none. Go on the contrary to London or Brighton, spend a Sunday afternoon in the smallest English country village, and you will remember in the evening many ideal faces which will have photographed themselves on your mind.

When, however, a Russian woman is pretty then you cannot easily forget her: I remember seeing at the Winter Palace some ideal faces—large blue eyes framed by fair hair. They were beautiful, only they lacked that individuality which gives a unique character to English and American women.

The men in Russia are decidedly ugly, and in no other country does one come across so many men who seem to take special care to affect a grotesque appearance by dressing their hair in fantastic shapes, either vertically or longitudinally. These men keep using a small hair brush, which comes into requisition whenever they remove their caps, either at a café or a theatre or a music-hall. Here, again, comes the contrast which you find in such men as General Dedouline and other members of the aristocracy, who are of striking physique and appearance.

A striking peculiarity of this peculiar people is a passion for wearing any kind of uniform. They love them. Schoolboys, students, and every

man who is ever so little connected with the administration dons a uniform, a symbol of superiority. In the same way, to rule over others is a craving common to all Russians. • Take the fiercest revolutionary and make him a gardavo (policeman) and he will soon make his old pals feel his power.

This will be for ever one of the chief difficulties in the way of securing full individual freedom especially in remote provincial districts.

To conceive and establish a constitutional system on the lines which exist in other countries of Europe will, I think, always be impossible.

Perhaps the most striking characteristic of the Russian mind is that Russians are convinced that their country differs from all others, and that the most vital changes can be brought about between dusk and dawn. Ask them how it is to be done, and they reply—"You don't know Russia!"

Only give Russia time. For centuries she has lagged behind in the race of nations, and now that she is roused at last, let the reformer give his country breathing-space before she can make good her Titan claim against the world! She who has slept so long, has been lying unconscious of the immense natural resources over which she was slumbering. But these are still there ready to be developed, and the men and women of the future will reap abundantly. It will be a new race of Russians, with new and larger hopes, that will share in this rich harvest. For, when Russia shall

have undergone her economic transformation, the Russian will be a European citizen of Russia, conscious of citizenship in its most ample sense, instead of the present semi-Asiatic dreamer looking vaguely for a new Byzantium to compensate him for the misery of his home. In the meantime, the reformer's task is not the fashioning of agitators but the moulding of educators ; his weapon is not the bomb but the school. When he has understood this, the revolutionary will have become a reformer. For centuries Russians have been sacrificed to Russia ; the time is coming when Russia is to belong to Russians. The past dream of expansion has received a check which it will be difficult to forget, and as time passes it will become more overwhelmingly clear that the supreme conquest of Russian ambition should and must be the soil of Russia ; no false pride must, however, prevent Russians from calling in foreign help to develop its resources.

The chief danger which must be now guarded against comes from the Socialists, whose accession to power would mean the tyranny of a pack of unscrupulous demagogues a hundred-fold worse than the autocratic rule of a Tsar whose acts, however bad, would never at least be inspired by sordid considerations of self-interest and mere gold. To benefit by the promises which the Tsar, Nicholas has made to his subjects, to enable Count Witte to put them into practical effect, the Liberals must cease to display a spirit of opposition, the Jews must join

hands with them, and be content to merge all minor differences for the common good.

As for the workman, the peasant, they must be made to understand that their interests are closely allied to those of the leading classes. Without employers what would become of the workman? Without capitalists to purchase his produce what would the peasant do with it?

All must, therefore, combine against the common enemy—the Socialists. That they will find themselves in a majority in the Duma must be anticipated; that they will propose the most radical policy is inevitable. Will, then, the overbearing forces of Absolutism have enough to raise their voice in protest against them? I doubt it.

If one considers the history of the past year, the whole story can be summed up in two words: demonstrations, concessions. Let strength, even momentary strength, be shown on the part of the would-be revolutionaries or the blindest supporters of Absolutism, and either party goes down. The great Manifesto was the triumph of the revolutionaries, the collapse of the Grand Duke party. The crushing of the Moscow rising was the collapse of the revolutionary party, the triumph of law and order. Assuming that Socialists are in overwhelming majority in the Duma, they will dominate the more moderate sections of the Assembly. They can be checked by one strong man—Count Witte. If he is not there to take the lead they may sweep every-

thing before them. If he is not there the Duma may become incoherent and threatening. Then who knows whether the fit of terror which seized the Grand Dukes on Red Sunday may not seize the pasteboard hero who might occupy Count Witte's place? If the Duma is dissolved by force this would be the old tale, of which even Russia is getting tired. And I should not, in these circumstances, like to assert so emphatically as I have done before, that a Revolution in Russia is impossible.

There is only one thing impossible in Russia, and that is to understand the Russians.

THE END

CHAPTER XV

COUNT TOLSTOI ON THE REVOLUTION

COUNT TOLSTOI, as Minister of Education in Count Witte's Cabinet, is at the head of one of the most responsible posts of the present Government, because it is education which can alone raise the Russian nation out of its present condition of pitiful ignorance.

It was from Count Tolstoi that I obtained all the information which I have given on the question of education.

The Minister is one of the most broad-minded members of the present Government, and is adverse to all unnecessary harshness ; it was, therefore, most interesting to obtain his views on the revolutionary movement and on the extraordinary measures of repression which had been adopted.

“ I am strongly opposed to all measures of exception,” the Minister replied to the question I put him on the latter subject, “ but the circumstances under which we were placed by the action of the revolutionaries made exceptional measures a necessity to cope with their methods.”

“When the manifestations began to assume a serious character,” he went on, “our chief difficulty was due to the lack of troops at the disposal of our Government.

“General Linevitch had sent back to Russia the worst element of the forces under his command, and the only troops upon whom we could rely were massed in Poland where their presence was indispensable to prevent a grave and general rising. You would hardly believe that, when the insurrection broke out in Moscow at the end of December, the Governor could avail himself of only 1800 men, and the revolutionaries were well aware of the fact. They had themselves mustered over 20,000 men, and their first and main object was to gain possession of the railway line in order to prevent reinforcements from reaching the town.

“On his side, the Governor turned his main attention to keeping the line clear and at first the fighting was concentrated in this direction.

“There are two railway stations in Moscow, both close together, and only separated by a large open square.

“The revolutionaries had managed to seize one of these two stations while the troops held the other, and firing was uninterrupted between those two strongholds across the open square which separates them.

“Cossacks kept patrolling the line, because from the station held by the revolutionaries it was possible

to run trains on to the main line by following a branch line which joins the main track a few miles outside the town. This led to a startling incident which will show you the dastardly methods employed by the revolutionaries.

"One of the Cossack officers in charge of the station held by the troops having heard that the revolutionaries were preparing to run a train with the object, it was thought, of blowing up the main line, at once got an engine coupled to a number of carriages in which he hastily embarked a few hundred Cossacks, steaming at full speed in the direction of the junction in order to intercept the insurgent train.

"To his delight, he found upon reaching the junction that he had forestalled the enemy, and he accordingly started his train up the branch line to stop the revolutionary train. Soon he came in sight of it and, stopping his own train, he disposed his men for attack. A well nourished fire compelled the insurgents to stop their train, and after holding their own for a few minutes they were at last overpowered and had to take to flight.

"While the fighting had been going on, the Cossack officer had been much puzzled by the sight of a huge erection which he had noticed at the back of a goods truck at the rear of the insurgent train; he believed at first that there was a piece of artillery mounted on the truck, but had to dismiss the

thought as the enemy kept away from it while the fighting went on.

“When the insurgents, whose small number also astonished him, had been cleared, the Cossack captain was able to examine their train and he discovered the explanation of what had so puzzled him. The erection which stood at the back of the goods truck attached to the rear of the insurgent train was formed of a mass of boxes of dynamite (several tons of it), and the revolutionaries’ intention had been to get their train on the main line and to shunt it on the track leading to the station held by the troops. The train would then have been backed and allowed to run alone at full speed, the engine driver jumping off after pulling the levers ; the truck loaded with dynamite would thus have run in front of the train and would have come into collision with the buffers of the station held by the troops ; the impact would then have exploded the dynamite, destroying the station and probably part of the town of Moscow. The action of this captain of Cossacks may be said to have saved Moscow from a terrible catastrophe.

“As I have said, the Governor of Moscow had at first only 1800 troops at his disposal : when reinforcements came these were increased by two battalions (2000 men), and with less than 4000 men he had to oppose 20,000 insurgents who could fight and rest in turn, as even when one half of their number was having rest the remainder still stood in

the proportion of 2 to 1 against the troops. This figure, however, does not give a correct estimate of the exact proportion, because, while the insurgents could mass their forces in whatever spot they chose, a large portion of the troops had to be employed to guard the Kremlin and other public buildings, and could not take part in the actual fighting. It may, therefore, be said without exaggeration, that the insurgents numbered five to each individual soldier.

“The behaviour of the troops was admirable, and if some excesses were committed here and there, on the whole it is a wonder how few people were shot without trial; think of the state of mind of soldiers who for nearly three days and three nights had been fighting incessantly without rest and without food from morning till night. They had to take by assault barricade after barricade, and no sooner was one taken than two others were erected in another part of the town. Yet less than 100 insurgents were shot after being taken fighting, and I think that if you consider the history of every great insurrection you will find that this number compares favourably with what has occurred elsewhere.”

I have already pointed out that Count Tolstoi is a man who hates violence and bloodshed, and that he neither advocates nor approves of violent measures unless they cannot be avoided. I asked him why martial law had been proclaimed in so

many parts of Russia and whether it could not have been avoided?

“The revolutionaries,” he said, “can only blame themselves for all that has happened. You cannot understand what our position was—I am speaking as one of the members of Count Witte’s Government—while the general strike lasted. We were entirely cut off from the remainder of Russia; we were even left in absolute ignorance as to what was going on; and, to add to our anxiety, the most absurd rumours were constantly reaching the capital and were spread by the revolutionary papers. We could not even tell whether these rumours might not have some foundation. Odessa, Kieff, Kharkoff, and every important town was said to have proclaimed a republic of its own. Some Governors were reported as having led the movement. Count Witte had therefore acted with the foresight of a great statesman in giving power to the Governors of Provinces to proclaim martial law either over the whole of their province or else over portions of it in case communications with Government should be interrupted. You must note that there are three kinds of martial law in Russia :

“(1) Usilinnaiä Ochrana: reinforced state of siege.

“(2) Tshreswitshainäia Ochrana: extraordinary state of siege.

“(3) Woiennäia Ochrana: state of war.

“The two first give special powers to the administration, such as the right of arresting any one without

warrant and the right of keeping a prisoner for a certain time in jail before trial, but all persons arrested must be dealt with by ordinary tribunals, the civil administration remaining supreme with extended powers.

“The third suspends all civil powers, and not only is justice entirely dealt with by courts-martial but the Governor may make laws and issue regulations which have the same weight as if they had been issued by the Tsar and passed by the Senate.

“You must not, however, imagine that all the scenes which marked the great revolutionary upheaval of last year have been tragic; in many cases the revolution has assumed the form of a regular farce. For instance, take what occurred at Irkousk. The amnesty granted by the Tsar brought back to this town a number of fierce Socialists, and no sooner had they arrived than they formed a committee of government and proclaimed a republic on the strength of the rumour that a republic had been already proclaimed at St. Petersburg. Having collected a number of ruffians they marched behind a red flag stuck on a pole towards the school. They called upon the boys to join them, and naturally the boys were not going to miss the fun, and they eagerly joined the manifestants. The procession thus formed marched to the barracks which were occupied by soldiers belonging to the last reserves and who were soldiers but in name.

“The committee called upon them to join the republic, which they promised to do. They sent their officers away and promised their support to the new government.

“The committee then went to the Governor’s residence and told him that he must go. Knowing that the troops could not be relied upon the Governor agreed to leave, and having transferred his powers to the vice-governor he left the town with a passport issued by the revolutionary committee.

“The vice-governor was at once seized with a convenient illness and took to his bed.

“The committee then returned to the barracks and called the soldiers out: they all came, but when they saw the red flag they asked what it meant. They were told that it was the flag of the new government; thereupon they seized it and tore it to pieces, declaring that having sworn allegiance to the regimental standard they were not going to serve under another one. They were, however, quite willing to sing the “Marseillaise,” but afterwards insisted upon the republicans intoning in their turn the hymn to the Tsar, which all did with enthusiasm. Followed by the soldiers the insurgents then proceeded to a cadet school which they proposed to use as their headquarters. When they reached the place they were astonished to find 180 cadets armed with guns who dared them to try and enter the building. In the presence of so determined an attitude the brave republicans preferred

to have nothing to do with so unreasonable a body of youngsters.

“The republic had been proclaimed, but nothing had been done so far except marching through the streets and singing. The soldiers drew up a list of demands to give a practical turn to the movement. They demanded :

“ (1) One pound of meat in their soup daily.

“ (2) Two pairs of boots yearly.

“ (3) In addition to these important reforms they mentioned as a secondary matter the formation of a ‘Constituante,’ with universal suffrage. They would have been greatly embarrassed to explain what this meant, and, of course, the meat and the boots were in their eyes far more important matters than the Constituante, but they asked for it because they were told that upon it depended the meat and boots.

“For several days the town remained in the hands of the insurgents; then news was heard that the regular troops belonging to Irkousk were returning from the seat of war; the moment they were in sight the *niçrœ* republican committee instantly vanished and the mutinous soldiers implored forgiveness from their officers.

“So collapsed the Irkousk Republic.

“To give you an idea,” added Count Tolstoi, “of the consequence of the general strike, a priest who was bringing some official documents to me from Irkousk left the town under the full impression

that a republic had been proclaimed at St. Petersburg ; the rumour was current in every town and village through which he passed, and it was only after he had crossed the Volga that he found out that the news was mere invention."

This, of course, confirms what I have so often said before on the subject.

The story which Count Tolstoi had told me reminded me of another incident equally amusing which I had heard before.

An agitator went to a village and visited the cottages of a few peasants living there.

" Brother," he said, as he entered a cottage, " we have a republic now and it is the duty of all good citizens to help it with a contribution. Come, let us have five roubles."

As the peasant demurred the agitator waxed angry.

" So you are a traitor," he cried in excited tones. " All right, you see this bomb"—showing something which he held in his hand—" this bomb is what we use to punish traitors. Refuse to help the cause and this bomb will blow up your house and reduce you to atoms."

Still the peasant was unconvinced : the agitator grew more excited, waved his bomb about, and at last in his excitement he let it drop.

The bomb 'did not explode, but the peasant seeing the bomb on the floor seemed puzzled by its resemblance to something which he seemed to know

well. Suddenly light came to his brain : he made a dash for the bomb and found that it was a potato. Calling some neighbours he fell upon the fierce agitator, and before the latter could escape, life had almost been knocked out of him. Bleeding, bedraggled, he ran away as fast as his legs would carry him, but the peasant kept pace with him and pelted him with stones. He would probably have been killed had not a priest rescued him and given him shelter in his house.

I was asking Count Tolstoi whether the story was true, and if he could also explain where the revolutionaries had found the money to carry on their campaign.

"I cannot tell you whether the story which you have heard is true, but it is very likely so. As to your question where the money used by the revolutionaries came from," said the Count, "it is very easy to explain. Everybody gave something ; I suppose that I must have given myself between £40 and £50 without knowing that I was helping the revolution."

"How is this possible?" I asked.

"It is very simple, You see, last year people kept calling to ask for subscriptions, some for widows of soldiers, others for crippled soldiers returning from the front, others for clothes, for soldiers' children, &c. &c. They presented lists on which appeared names of people, many of whom were friends of ours. Some had given fifty roubles

others one hundred or more. So according to the amount which men in a position similar to mine had given I gave a similar amount. Now I am sure that all this money was used by the revolutionaries."

"But," I remarked, "I cannot understand how you could have been so simple as to give money to people whom you did not know, merely on the strength of a list shown to you."

"It may appear so to you," replied the Count, "but we are not suspicious in Russia, and the men who called looked quite respectable. Many of them were in uniform with decorations, and besides this, the fact of seeing the names of friends and acquaintances on the lists was, or appeared to be, a sufficient guarantee and quite satisfied me and everybody else. Among the lower classes money was usually obtained by threats of violence. Of course now the game is played out, and this is one of the reasons why I think the revolutionaries will find it very difficult to start a fresh movement.

"Of course we must expect partial risings, and especially attacks on individuals. It may be my turn to-morrow. All I ask is that I should be killed outright; I would hate to be disfigured or crippled for life. To return to the question of the money obtained by the revolutionaries, it is a well-known fact that some very wealthy people gave large sums to support the movement. One very wealthy lady among others is credited with having supplied the revolutionary leaders with more than £60,000, and

although I cannot guarantee the fact, I have every reason to believe that the statement is correct. This lady is not the only one among rich people who gave large sums to the Revolutionary Party, and I confess that I am unable to understand the object which such people have had."

All this proves once more that Russia is unlike any other country, and the more one studies the history of the 'revolutionary movement the less one is able to understand anything about it. Tragedy, comedy, ignorance and credulity, unbounded kindness and ruthless cruelty. all seem to go side by side, but motives and objects are impossible to fathom. Russia is Sphinx-like in her energy as in her patience.

CHAPTER XVI

TREPOFF'S SUCCESSOR

I HAVE so far devoted special attention to the views of men unconnected with repression ; therefore it is now only fair to show what those whose acts are so violently attacked have to say for themselves. I have had the good fortune of being able to form an opinion from personal interviews with several of the statesmen and high officials who have taken, and are still taking, a leading part in the government of Russia, and I am bound to say that I have been greatly impressed by the contrast between them and most of their opponents. While their opponents find nothing too bad to say of the men in power, the latter show no bitterness and no resentment against the revolutionaries who have made their task so heavy, who have, indeed, done all in their power to prevent them from carrying out the reforms which the revolutionaries themselves claim with such insistence.

One of the most interesting personalities of the moment is certainly General Dedouline, the Chief of the Police, or rather Prefect of St. Petersburg, as

he is officially named. He succeeded General Trepoff on November 9th last. General Dedouline has been successful in restoring order in St. Petersburg, and while he has been holding his high position no disorder of any kind has broken out in the capital of Russia.

When I called on the General I was shown into a large room, bright and cheerful, with its white walls reflecting light from three large windows.

General Dedouline was seated at a large table covered with papers. A telephone and several electric bells were within reach of his hand.

A shrewd observer had, however, only to look at the table to form an idea of the character of the man who used it. All the accessories spoke of refinement and good taste; I noticed a large inkstand, silver-mounted paper knives, ash trays and other desk fittings, all simple but artistic; a charming clock and other knick-knacks spoke of a man who felt the need of refinement even when engaged in the most prosaic work.

Such small details never fail to give a true insight into the character of a man. For instance, when I interviewed, some years ago, M. Pobedonosteff, the stern Procurator of the Holy Synod, I was struck by the appearance of his study, with its walls covered with a green paper, its mahogany furniture and a desk on which stood a plain office inkstand. Paper-knives, pen-holders, and so forth were of the cheapest description; you could see

that they had been bought purely for work without consideration for appearances. The room was cold, stern, angular, and so was M. Pobedonosteff. General de Wahl, a former Prefect of Police of St. Petersburg, had a small office with tables and chairs littered with papers; the furniture was heavy, the appointments massive; the General was himself narrow-minded; he was meddlesome and a regular tyrant.

To return to General Dedouline. Like his table his costume denoted taste and refinement. He was wearing a kind of dolman of grey material with no ornament save the broad shoulder-straps of his rank, an imperial crown and other designs embroidered on a gold background on a broad band fixed to the shoulders. This dolman was not buttoned up, but showed a kind of white waistcoat closed to the throat, and finishing with a neck-band from which hung a red ribbon with a decoration attached to it. It was exactly as if he had been wearing a white patrol jacket with an open dolman over it—a very smart uniform, and the only one of its kind which I have seen. Let us now consider the man himself.

Few men possess a more striking individuality. His face, manners, and his very voice show the same refinement as his surroundings. General Dedouline is a man who either in a crowd or in the most exclusive drawing-room would be sure to command attention and interest. Well over six feet in height he holds himself erect without stiffness; his fore-

head is high, his eyes dark and full of expression, and he always looks straight at you. He wears a dark moustache, which surmounts a firm mouth with a strong chin. Intelligence and determination are written on his face, but there is in it no sign of brutality or cruelty such as appeared in the features of a predecessor whom I have mentioned—General de Wahl. General Dedouline looks, however, tired; and small wonder, considering the heavy responsibility and hard work which his position has entailed during the past year. I remarked to him how weary he must feel. “Yes,” he answered, “and I am looking forward to the rest which I shall be able to enjoy soon, as I have received another appointment and will soon be relieved of the heavy burden which has fallen upon me. My new position will entail immense responsibility; I am appointed Commander-in-Chief of all the Russian Gendarmerie, but it will be free of the mass of petty details to which I must now attend.”

“I think, General,” I then said, “that it requires considerable pluck and abnegation to fill a post like yours.”

“Well, you must not be a coward, I admit, but the Tsar will never lack officers who will gladly risk their lives so long as they feel that they can be useful to him and to their country.”

“What strikes me,” I remarked, “is the small amount of precaution which—in appearance at least—seems to be taken to protect men like yourself

from the attacks of a fanatic. I am told that you receive daily every one who wishes to see you between 11 A.M. and 1 P.M. Is it so?"

"Yes," replied the General, smiling. "I have workmen, socialists, revolutionaries, people of every kind and condition who come to see me every day, and although I take precautions and have always some one at hand to come to my help if needed, still when my daily reception is over I instinctively make the sign of the cross and thank the Lord for having protected me and given me another day to live."

"Can you tell me," I asked, "why the police are so hated by Russians in general? Your constables do not appear to be harsh or peremptory with the people, yet every one seems to hate them."

"The reason can easily be explained. You see, I have far too few men at my disposal. When I took the service I had only 3000 constables for a town with a population exceeding one and a half millions of inhabitants, and although I have increased the force by 1000 men, still 4000 policemen are not sufficient for the work which has to be performed. Things are still worse in the Criminal Investigation Department, where I have only eighty detectives at my disposal, so that I have constantly to use uniformed constables to carry out the work which ought to be done by detectives. Consequently the people have come to look upon the uniformed policemen not as men entrusted only with the

protection of life and property, but as spies and

APPENDIX

THE POLITICAL PARTIES OF RUSSIA

SINCE the Duma is shortly going to meet, it is very necessary to form an idea of the different parties into which the Russian National Assembly will be grouped. As I have explained before, these parties number twenty-seven; many, however, are only ramifications of main parties. They may be divided into four great divisions and nine groups.

NAME OF PARTY.

TENDENCIES.

SIDE OF DUMA WHERE
ITS ADHERENTS
WILL SIT.

I. PARTISANS OF UNLIMITED ABSOLUTISM.

1. The Black Band	Ultra Reactionaries.	Extreme Right.
Russkoye Sobranje (Russian Re-Union).	Reactionaries.	Extreme Right.

II. PARTISANS OF CONSTITUTIONAL MONARCHY.

2. Party of Public Order and Law	Conservatives.	Right.
3. Party of the 17th October	Moderate Conservatives.	Centre.
4. Party of Commerce and Industry	Moderate Liberals.	Centre.
5. Party of Constitutional Democrats	Progressives.	Left.
6. Party of Independent Labour	Alleged Socialists.	Left.

III. PARTISANS OF A REPUBLIC.

7. Social Democrats	Radicals.	Advanced Left.
8. Revolutionary Socialists	Socialists.	Extreme Left.

IV. ENEMIES OF ALL GOVERNMENT.

Anarchists
Tolstoyens

Without importance or influence.

In the following pages will be found a summary of the programme advocated by the members of these various parties. A glance at this list will show what the task of the Government will be when the Duma meets.

LIST OF THE RUSSIAN POLITICAL PARTIES

I. PARTISANS OF ABSOLUTISM

1. THE BLACK BAND

- Aim.** Maintenance of the old *régime*; merciless repression of all disorders, of which the authors are, according to the members of this party, students, doctors, advocates, &c., "corrupted by foreign money," as well as all the Russians not of Slavonic origin, Jews, Lithuanians, Poles, Finns, &c.
- Methods.** This party advocates the most extreme measures of repression, to be carried out by the police and the administration against the revolutionaries and all those who sympathize with them. They also advocate the co-operation of the people in carrying out the campaign against all those who are in favour of reform, using for the purpose the methods exposed in chapter xxi. p. 229.
- History.** The party was formed during the last few years to counteract the Liberating Movement. It consists of people interested in the preservation of the old *régime* of absolutism.
- Organization.** The party has no special organization; but it has groups, by whom an active propaganda is carried out at Moscow; for instance, the butchers

and market salesmen ("ochotui") have been enlisted as supporters of this party. At St. Petersburg, the cobblers, as well as the members of the National League.

The secret publication of placards and leaflets, aiming at rousing the masses; the purchase of arms; attacks *en masse* and by night, on the revolutionaries. Many of the anti-Jewish massacres have been prepared and organized by men belonging to the Black Band. Tactics.

(Extracts from the bulletins of the party.) Abolitionism of the Emperor with the administration in the hands of the police and of the bureaucracy. Programme.

All citizens of non-Slavonic origin, although Russian subjects, particularly the Jews, are the enemies of Russia. They are responsible for the revolution and have been bought by foreign money. They must be exterminated, and no pity is to be shown in dealing with them. Treatment of the Inhabitants of the Frontier Provinces.

There should be neither Duma nor Constitution. Duma.

Citizens have no rights outside those which the administration, the police, consent to grant them. Right of Vote.

The cause of all the agrarian troubles is the idleness of the peasant and the intrigues of the revolutionaries. The peasants ought to exterminate them, and endure all with resignation, trusting to the administration to improve their condition. The Agrarian Question.

- The Labour Question.** The grievances of the workmen have been invented by the revolutionaries.
- The Financial Question.** The economic welfare of Russia has been destroyed by the Jews and the strikers; when both have been exterminated prosperity will return.
- Education and religion.** The Church should infuse in her parishioners hatred against revolutionaries, Jews, Catholics, Protestants, and all non-orthodox creeds. Education should be entirely in the hands of the Church.
- Justice.** The best punishment is corporal punishment. Every revolutionary should be hanged without trial.

2. PARTY OF THE "RUSSKOJE SOBRANJE"

(RUSSIAN RE-UNION)

More Conservative than the party of Public Order and that "Of the 17th of October."

- Principles.** Absolutism, exclusive pan-Slavism, orthodoxy, ultra-reactionary tendencies. This party has lost its influence. Since the Manifesto was issued, the greater part of its adherents have gone over to the two parties with which we will deal next. Those who still adhere to this party (the Russian Re-union) have for guiding principle: Not to recognize the Manifesto of October 17, to fight against revolutionary, radical, moderate and liberal tendencies. They want Absolutism to be maintained as it was before the Manifesto.

II. PARTISANS OF CONSTITUTIONAL MONARCHY

3. PARTY OF PUBLIC ORDER AND LAW

(CONSERVATIVE)

(Analogous to the party of 17th of October only less divided and more "Right" than the latter. The difference between the two is very slight.)

Above all order must be assured. It is indispensable to have a powerful re-organised army; a strong man at the head of Government, and he must dispose of powers enabling him to cope with the revolutionary as well as with the reactionary party. Aim.

The rich bourgeoisie, some bureaucrats, and the Conservative groups of peasants and workmen. Adherents.

Measures must be taken to prevent general strikes; war must be waged with legal weapons against the Socialists, all men with federalistic tendencies, and at the same time against reaction. The separate autonomy of no part of the Empire is admitted by this party. Programme.

The Duma is regarded as an institution of State, and not as a representative institution. It should

have for object to consolidate the authority and increase the power of Government. The party otherwise approves of everything contained in the Manifesto of October 17.

Agrarian Question. The party supports the claims of the peasants for more land.

Labour Question. Reduction of working hours. Obligatory insurance. Revision of the Labour Laws.

Financial Question. No income tax. Diminution of taxes paid by peasants. Primary instruction universal and gratuitous.

As will be seen, the difference between this party and that of October 17 is not important, except that this party is more Conservative than the last mentioned.

4. PARTY OF THE 17th OF OCTOBER

(MODERATE CONSERVATIVES. CENTRE.)

Aim. To form a united party equally opposed to revolution and reaction, its members actively co-operating together for the purpose of supporting a Government powerful enough to preserve order and maintain the unity of the Empire with the legal support of the nation.

History. This party sat on the "Right" at the Congress of the Zemstvos at Moscow: Schipoff, Stakhovitsky, Gontschkoff are prominent men belonging to it.

Petitions, addresses, propaganda to make known the principles of October 17. The party from its formation demanded the convocation of the Duma as soon as possible. Tactics.

A constitutional monarchy, in accordance with the principles of the Manifesto of October 17. The local administration of the provinces to secure the co-operation and to accept advice from the men having large interests and occupying prominent positions in the province. Form of Government.

The party insists upon allowing Finland alone to enjoy a separate autonomy; all the other portions of the Empire to be under a central administration. Racial Question.

The Duma should revise the laws and decide all the most important questions. The party at the same time is opposed to a Constituent Assembly. Duma.

Universal but indirect voting. People without any fixed domicile to have no vote. The rights promised by the Manifesto to be enforced. Workmen to have the right to go on strike. Equality of all before the Law are the main points of the party's programme. Franchise, Civic Rights.

The peasants to be granted an increase of land supplied by the State. Agrarian Question.

Revision of the Labour Laws. of the position of working men. Amelioration Insurance of Labour Question.

workmen. Compensation to be given to workmen in cases of sickness, accidents or death.

Finance. Progressive income tax.

Education. Universal and gratuitous, liberty of private initiative.

5. PARTY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY

(This party takes its place between that of the 17th October and the Constitutional Democratic party.)

Aim. A strong Government acting in co-operation with the Duma to establish order and peace.

Adherents. The great Manufacturers at Moscow.

Régime advocated. Constitutional monarchy in accordance with the declarations of the manifesto. Unity of the Empire.

Duma. Not to act as Constituent Assembly.

Franchise. No special views.

Labour and agrarian Questions. Fundamental revision of the industrial laws. Amelioration of the peasants' position by establishing rural banks which will facilitate the purchase of land.

Finance. Income tax. Diminution of useless expenditure on the Budget.

Right of private initiative. Universal primary ^{Educa-} education. _{tion}

6. CONSTITUTIONAL DEMOCRATIC PARTY

(DIVIDED INTO TWO SECTIONS. LEFT AND RIGHT)

The Left of the party wishes to act with the ^{Tactics.} revolutionary parties to fight against reaction. The Right, on the contrary, does not agree to this, and insists upon remaining quite independent of the revolutionaries.

The Right (majority) wants a Constitutional ^{Form of} Monarchy; the Left advocates a Republic as the ^{Govern-} best form of government. _{ment.}

The Right wants two Representative Chambers while the Left is in favour of a single one. The party is in favour of local administration with a representative council in the provinces. The countries situated near the frontiers with a non-Slavonic population to have local autonomy; all the autonomous provinces to be also represented in the Duma. Poland to have autonomy, with representative Diet, on the condition of maintaining the unity of the Russian Empire.

The Right wants a Duma and an Upper ^{Duma.} Chamber. The Left wants no Duma, and advocates the election of one Chamber only vested with constitutional powers.

Right : All citizens to have civic rights ; universal ^{Franchis-} suffrage, equal, direct, and secret. Women to have _{es.} the franchise. The Left : Against the right of

woman to vote, and wants equal civic rights for all, liberty of conscience, free speech, right of forming trade unions, and right of striking. They claim personal freedom guaranteed by habeas corpus.

**Agrarian
Question.**

More land for the peasants, to be supplied by the Government out of the Crown lands and out of the lands attached to monasteries. Private estates to be also acquired for the purpose through compulsory sale at *fair* prices—regardless of the market price.

**Labour
Question.**

Eight hours day. Control of factories by independent inspectors and representatives of the workmen. Regulation of the work of women and children. Arbitration boards to settle all disputes between employers and employees, who are to be represented by an equal number of delegates on this Board. Government insurance for workmen.

Finance.

Reduction of useless expenditure. Diminution on indirect taxes. Progressive income tax. Diminution of the Customs tariffs.

**Educa-
tion.**

“Democratization” and “decentralization” of public instruction. Primary public instruction universal, obligatory, and free. Liberty of initiative, private and communal, in matters of education. Abolition of the control of the church.

7. INDEPENDENT LABOUR PARTY

This party was formed by Father Gapon.* It is composed of workmen sick of the revolution. Their programme is very similar to the programme of the Social Democrats, except for the fact that they rely upon the promises made in the Manifesto of October 17. They are opposed to all revolutionary movements and advocate the use of peaceful methods. They are officially supported by Government.

* Father Gapon must not be looked upon as the patriot whom he has tried to make himself out. He is a most despicable individual—a mercenary traitor, and proof has been given to me that he is a vulgar spy in the pay of the police.

III. PARTISANS OF A REPUBLIC

8. SOCIAL DEMOCRATS

Aim.	Theory of Marxism. Conflict of classes ideal. Socialism alone will deliver the world.
Their Press.	At St. Petersburg, <i>Novaja, Schisu, and Natschalo.</i> At Moscow, <i>Borba.</i> At the present moment the publication of Social Democratic papers is forbidden in Russia.
Organization. Tactics.	Propaganda of the conflict of classes and systematic organization of the Proletariate. No individual terrorism (assassination), but riots, revolution, insurrections, and all methods by which the people can terrorise the capitalists.
Régime advocated.	Democratic Republic with Representative Assembly elected for two years. A large measure of autonomy for local administration.
Racial Question.	Right of free existence for all; • non-Slavonic Russians to have the choice of their own <i>régime</i> and to decide as to their relations with Russia.
Duma.	The party is not in favour of it as a whole, but the Social Democrats are divided on the question.

Some want to boycott it, others hope to use it as a means of transforming it into a "Constituante." The latter form of Assembly is demanded by the entire party.

Franchise universal, equal, secret, and direct for all those who have reached the age of twenty. Free speech, freedom to hold meetings, freedom of conscience, the right to form associations; strikes to be legal. Abolition of States. Equality of civic rights for the whole world without distinctions of race, religion or nationality.

Ought to be settled according to Marx's views. In the meantime the party supports the demands, to satisfy which they advocate the confiscation of private property for their benefit.

Eight hours work a day; night work, the working of children under sixteen, the work of women, whenever likely to prove injurious to health, to be prohibited; labour bureaus to be established. Employers to be responsible for all breaches of the law. Government insurance compulsory.

Abolition of all direct and indirect taxation, progressive income tax and death dues.

Free education for all children up to sixteen. Separation of Church and State.

Election of judges by the people!

No permanent army but universal militia

Franchise.

Agrarian Question.

Labour Question.

Finance.

Education.

Justice.

Army.

9. REVOLUTIONARY SOCIALISTS

Aim. Socialism.

History. Successors of the "Narodneja Wolja" of 1878-1881. Refugees settled in Switzerland formed this party.

Press. Formerly the journal *Russie Revolutionnaire* in Switzerland; lately the *Sin Oteschestwa* at St. Petersburg, which has been suppressed.

Organization. Central committee.

Régime advocated. Democratic Republic.

Tactics. Every available means; individuals and multitudes to seize every opportunity to terrorise capitalists and Governments.

Treatment of non-Slavonic Races. Autonomy of all countries with separate nationality.

Duma. Boycott the Duma. Immediate convocation of a "Constituante."

Franchise. Direct, equal, universal, secret vote for every subject, male or female, who has reached the age of twenty. Professional representation.

Community of land. Immediate confiscation of Agrarian estates. The remedy for agrarian troubles consists in the repartition of the land between all the peasants. No agrarian Marxism. Agrarian Question.

Same views as Social Democrats. The main difference between the Revolutionary Socialists and the Social Democrats lies in the fact that, while the former advocate terrorism as the means of securing their ends, the latter are entirely opposed to such methods. Labour. Finance. Education.

